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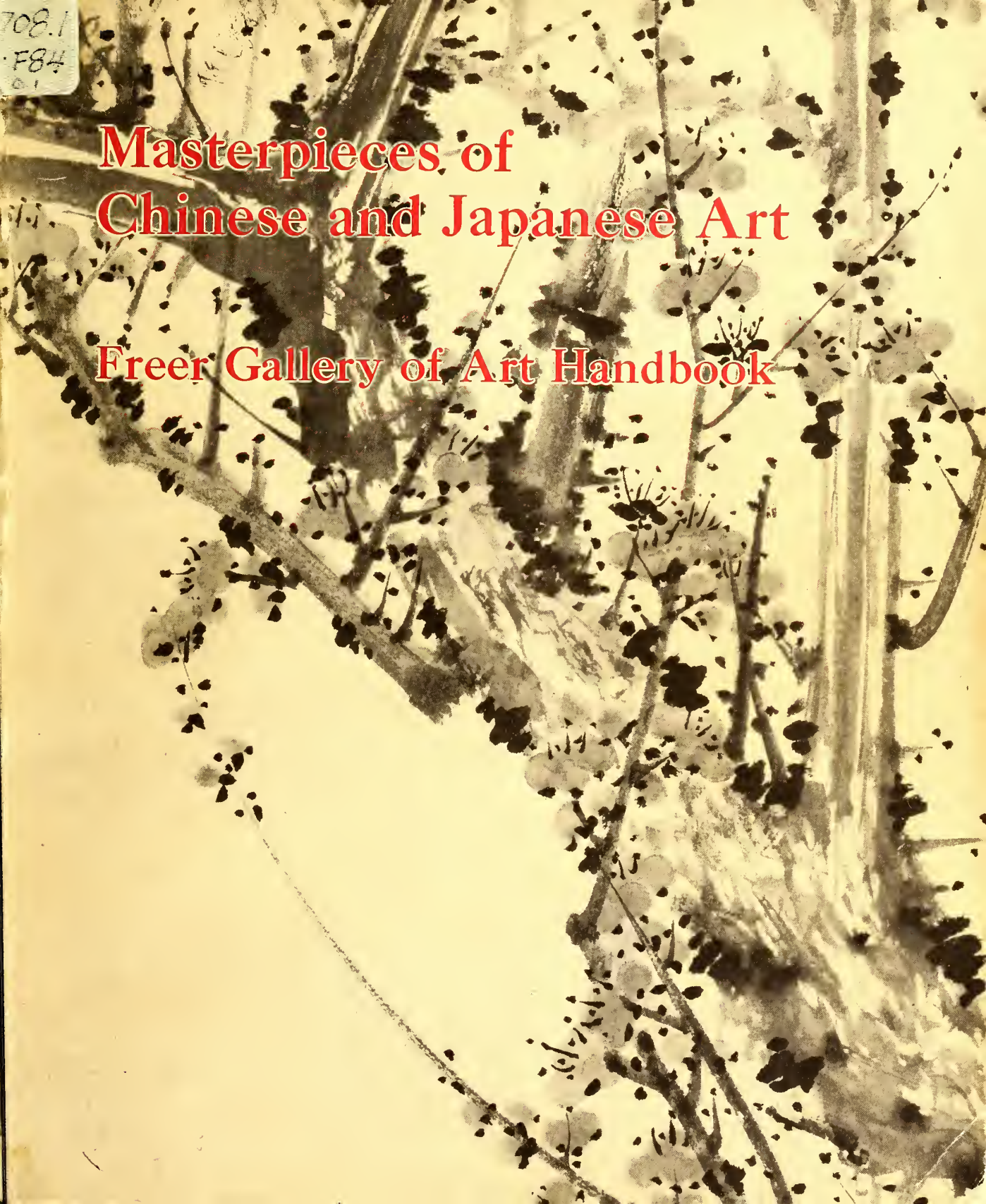

Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art

Freer Gallery of Art Handbook

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Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art

Freer Gallery of Art Handbook

Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.
1976

FREER GALLERY OF ART

F84

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FOREWORD

The Freer Gallery of Art was established in 1906 by the gift of Charles Lang Freer of Detroit, Michigan. The collections, a Gallery in which to house them, and an endowment to permit research and additions to the collections were provided by the donor. Through the years, one of the goals of the staff has been to encourage an understanding of the arts and civilizations represented by the collections and to make this information readily available to the public.

This handbook is devoted to a selection of some of the most outstanding examples of Chinese and Japanese art in the Freer Gallery of Art. It is the first in a projected series of guidebooks. Subsequent volumes will present similar treatment of the Near Eastern, Indian, Korean, and American collections.

It has been the direction of the Freer Gallery of Art for many years to initiate this volume. Unfortunately, costs have precluded it until the present. Its realization was made possible by the grant of special funds from the Weatherhead Foundation, Mr. Richard Weatherhead, and the National Endowment for the Arts. We are indeed grateful to them. Without their generous financial support, this volume would not have been possible.

Harold P. Stern
Director

May, 1976

INTRODUCTION

The Freer Gallery of Art came into being when Charles Lang Freer, of Detroit, gave his collection in trust to the Smithsonian Institution, provided funds for a building to house it, and established an endowment the income from which would make possible the purchase of additional works of Oriental art and finance a program of research into the civilizations of the East.

The formal deed of gift was executed on May 5, 1906, during the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. Under the terms of this deed, Mr. Freer retained the right to keep the collection in his possession during his lifetime and to make additions to it, although it was understood that an object once incorporated in the collection should not be removed from it. After his death the collection was to be removed to Washington and placed in a building given by the founder, designed in accordance with his wishes and erected within the grounds of the Smithsonian Institution. In accepting this gift, the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution agreed to care for and maintain the building and collection at public expense.

Charles Freer was born at Kingston, New York, on February 25, 1856. His ancestors were French Huguenots who fled France during the religious persecutions of the seventeenth century; and the first member of the family to come to America was one of the original holders of a royal land grant in New Paltz, New York.

As a boy of 14, after having attended public school, he went to work in a cement factory in his neighborhood. At 16 he was a clerk in the general store of John C. Brodhead at Kingston. In the same building with the store were the offices of the New York, Kingston & Syracuse Railroad of which Colonel Frank J. Hecker was the superintendent. The latter was attracted by the ability of young Freer and in 1873 took him into his employ, thus beginning an association that was to endure for life. After several years of railroad work Charles Freer went with Colonel Hecker to Detroit, where, in 1880, he took part in the organization of the Penninsular Car Works and became assistant treasurer. Between 1880 and 1900 Mr. Freer was associated with this company and those which succeeded it. In 1900, after completing his work in the mergers that formed the American Car & Foundry Co., he retired from active business. He was 44 years old.

For the last 19 years of his life, Mr. Freer devoted the greater part of his time and interest to the study and development of his art collection, begun during the early eighties.

His first acquisitions were etchings and lithographs. Among the earliest objects in the present collection is the set of Whistler etchings, "Venice, Second Series," bought in 1887. About 1888, on a visit to England he met James Abbott McNeill Whistler, and from this moment he turned more and more to the art of Japan. A brief period of interest in the Ukiyo-e prints led him to the older arts of Japan—paintings, screens, and pottery—and these in turn directed his interest to the classic arts of China.

Mr. Freer made four trips to the Far East: in 1895, 1907, 1909 and 1910-11. It was during these trips that he studied public and private collections, discussed problems with scholars and collectors, and made purchases that would improve and expand his own collection. Entries in his diaries and statements from his correspondence from these years reveal how much Mr. Freer learned during these trips, and how modest he was about his own knowledge, even after he was acknowledged as an important collector.

Once he had returned to the United States, the cataloguing of his collection and a series of illnesses prevented Mr. Freer from returning to the Far East again. But the results of his four trips can be seen in the growing discernment that characterized his purchases during the years remaining before his death in 1919.

As a collector, Charles Freer possessed a sensitive and discriminating taste that stood him in good stead as he adventured among the fine arts of the classic antiquity of the Far East, just beginning to be seen by Western eyes. His generous provision for future acquisitions and for serious study in this field was significant of his recognition of its importance to scholarship as well as to aesthetics. His gift was appropriately placed in the care of the Smithsonian Institution, whose seal is inscribed with the words: "For the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." Mr. Freer died in New York City on September 25, 1919.

The reason for the establishment of the Freer Gallery of Art was Mr. Freer's desire to make his important collection available to the people of the United States, and to encourage and promote continuing research into the civilizations of those countries in which the Oriental objects were created.

The two principal provisions of his will provide for additions to the Oriental collection and for the study of their sources. Though Mr. Freer was not a scholar himself, he had a deep and sincere regard for truth, and for exact understanding of the fine arts; and his generous provision for acquisition and study in the Oriental field was significant of his recognition of the importance of scholarship, as well as of the improvement of aesthetic standards.

The implementation of the very general terms of the will was left largely to the imagination and initiative of the first Director (or Curator, as he was then called), John Ellerton Lodge. Following Mr. Freer's death, the building was completed and the collections were moved from Detroit to Washington; installation and the arrangement of storage facilities were carried on during 1921 and 1922 and the building was formally opened on May 2, 1923.

From the very beginning important additions were made to the collection under the terms set forth in Mr. Freer's will. With the passing of the years and the steady increase in interest and knowledge, the quality and importance of the works of Far Eastern and Near Eastern art that have come on the market have become higher and higher so that the purchases of the last five decades have not only augmented the size of the collection but have raised the level of quality to new heights. It is no exaggera-

tion to say that wherever the arts of Asia are collected or studied today, the collection of the Freer Gallery is recognized as setting a standard of excellence by which other collections and individual objects may be judged. Mr. Freer bequeathed some 9,000 objects to the nation; and in the intervening years almost 3,000 more have been added to the collection. For reasons of physical space and, even more important, to maintain a tasteful installation, only a small percentage of the collection is exhibited at any one time; but the objects on exhibition are changed now and then, and objects in storage are always available by appointment to students and any others with special interests. This point was stressed by Mr. Freer in the first paragraph of the Deed of Gift when he said, "the building shall be constructed and equipped by the said Institution with the sum so bequeathed with special regard for the convenience of students and others desirous of an opportunity for uninterrupted study of the objects embraced thereunder." Occasional special exhibitions are held to illustrate particular aspects of Oriental art, and these are made up of objects in the collection. The Deed of Gift specifically forbids loans to or from the collection.

The Technical Laboratory, established at the Gallery in 1951, carries on a program of research into the methods and materials of ancient craftsmen with the twofold goal of increasing our knowledge of the history of technology in Asia and enabling the Gallery to better preserve and protect the objects of art with which it is entrusted.

And so the Freer Gallery of Art stands on the Mall in Washington today as a monument to the ideals of that remarkable man, Charles Lang Freer. The Oriental collection continues to grow, broadening in scope and improving in quality; and the research of the scholarly staff continues to throw new light on the historical, physical, and spiritual origins of the works of art. Successive directors of the Gallery have striven to carry on this program on the same high level of excellence as that on which it was established by the founder.

FREER GALLERY OF ART
May 1976

HAROLD P. STERN
Director

Admission free.

The Gallery is open every day, including Sunday, from 10 A.M. until 5:30 P.M. It is closed on Christmas Day.

For the convenience of those who desire to pursue work among the objects in the collection, or to study the related cultures, adequate provision has been made. Only a limited number of objects from among the more than 12,000 comprising the collection are shown at any one time in the exhibition galleries, but all are available for the use of students during office hours, from Monday through Friday.

Application for permission to copy objects in the galleries, to photograph with tripod and flash, or to see objects not on exhibition should be made at the administration office situated in the eastern end of the building and reached by the east stairway downward from the entrance lobby.

A wheelchair may be had on application to the guard at the north entrance.

Umbrellas, canes, packages, and baggage must be checked at the entrance.

THE LIBRARY

The library, on the ground floor, is open to readers during office hours, from 10 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily, from Monday through Friday. It contains over 34,000 books, pamphlets, and periodicals, approximately 18,600 of which are in Chinese and 2,000 in Japanese, devoted to subjects represented in the collection, namely, the arts and culture of the Far East, India, and the Near East; Biblical manuscripts; and the life and works of James McNeill Whistler and other American painters represented in the collection. These publications are for use inside the building only.

CHINESE CHRONOLOGY

NEOLITHIC ca. 5000-ca. 1500 B.C.	
SHANG ca. 1523-ca. 1028 B.C.	Move of capital to Anyang ca. 1300 B.C.
CHOU ca. 1027-256 B.C.	Western Chou ca. 1027-771 B.C. Eastern Chou 770-256 B.C. Spring and Autumn period 722-481 B.C. Warring States period 480-221 B.C.
CH'IN 221-206 B.C.	
HAN 206 B.C.-A.D. 220	Western Han 206 B.C.-A.D. 9 Wang Mang Interregnum 9-24 Eastern Han 25-220
THREE KINGDOMS 221-265	
CHIN 265-420	Western Chin 265-316 Eastern Chin 317-420
SOUTHERN DYNASTIES 420-589	Liu Sung 420-479 Southern Ch'i 479-502 Liang 502-557 Ch'en 557-581
NORTHERN DYNASTIES 386-581	Northern Wei 386-535 Eastern Wei 534-550 Western Wei 535-557 Northern Ch'i 550-577 Northern Chou 557-581
SUI 581-618	
T'ANG 618-906	
FIVE DYNASTIES 907-960	
SUNG 960-1279	Northern Sung 960-1127 Southern Sung 1127-1279
	Liao 907-1125 Chin 1115-1234
YÜAN 1279-1368	
MING 1368-1644	
CH'ING 1644-1912	
THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1912-	
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1949-	

CHINESE ART

China's long unbroken history is, in itself, sufficient to evoke wonder and admiration. Equally remarkable is the fact that throughout the thousands of years of their history, the Chinese have continued to create artifacts of outstanding design and technical perfection. These characteristics appeared on objects dating as early as the Neolithic Period, and were to remain hallmarks of Chinese art.

No people have ever surpassed the ancient Chinese in the art of bronze casting. Used in ritual sacrifices offered to deceased ancestors of kings and aristocratic clansmen, the bronze vessels dating from the Shang (ca. 1523-ca. 1028 B.C.) and Chou (ca. 1027-221 B.C.) dynasties provide eloquent proof of Chinese mastery of piece-mold casting. Although the complex imagery of the ornamentation on the bronzes remains enigmatic, stylistic changes in various elements of the decoration enable scholars to date individual pieces with certainty. In addition, many bronze vessels have inscriptions cast into their surfaces. Shang dynasty inscriptions evolved from simple pictograms, probably clan signs, to terse ancestor dedications and finally, in late Shang, into more lengthy inscriptions recording specific dates, people and events. Western Chou (ca. 1027-771 B.C.) bronze inscriptions are particularly long, providing valuable information for the study of the social and political history of the period.

Following the move of the capital to Loyang in 770 B.C. at the beginning of Eastern Chou, there was a marked change in the decoration of bronze ritual vessels. Eastern Chou artisans gradually replaced the bold, often crudely cast, designs that characterize late Western Chou bronzes with motifs consisting predominantly of small, finely articulated interlaced units. During the late Eastern Chou (5th-3rd century B.C.), there was a marked preference for complex inlay designs over the earlier ornamentation cast in relief. The sumptuous inlays, with their pronounced secular character, were the final major innovation in the ornamentation of Chinese bronze vessels. Hunting scenes and tentative representations of landscapes on late Chou bronzes reflect a growing interest in subjects more suitable to other media. During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), decoration was incised into the surface of the bronze after casting.

Throughout the Shang and Chou dynasties, large numbers of weapons and chariot fittings were cast in addition to the ceremonial bronze vessels. As the Chou dynasty broke up into the feudal kingdoms known as the Warring States, mirrors and garment hooks expanded the repertoire of bronze artifacts. Whereas belt hooks were made only in late Eastern Chou and in the Han dynasty, the casting of mirrors, which may have begun as early as Shang, developed elaborately symbolic designs from the early Eastern Chou to the T'ang.

In China, jade has always enjoyed an esteem approaching veneration, and jade carving has been ranked among the major arts from prehistoric times to the present day. Strictly speaking, the term "jade" refers to two minerals: nephrite and jadeite, neither of which has been found in China. Turkestan in Central Asia was the main

source of nephrite from neolithic times, and Burma the source of jadeite from the eighteenth century. Being too hard to be cut by metal, jade has to be worked by a difficult and laborious process of grinding with abrasives. The Freer collection includes many outstanding examples of jade ceremonial weapons, emblems of rank and religious symbols dating from the Shang and Chou dynasties. Delicately carved ornaments, sword fittings and archer's thumb rings of the late Chou and Han dynasties provide examples from what is generally regarded as one of the most creative periods of Chinese jade carving. The large white nephrite incense burner, dating from the eighteenth century, epitomizes the archaistic interests and technical perfection of Ch'ing dynasty jade artisans.

The arrival of Buddhism from India in the Han dynasty marked the first serious intrusion of foreign ideas and images into China. While Chinese intellectuals were studying, translating and annotating Buddhist texts, Chinese artisans were faced with the task of transforming the distinctly foreign religious images into styles more acceptable to their Chinese patrons. A small group of early gilt bronze statuettes, some of which are dated, makes it possible to trace the gradual sinification of Buddhist deities in the fifth and sixth centuries. The well-known Chinese Buddhist cave temples, including those at Tun-huang, Yün-kang, Lung-men and Kung-hsien, still preserve wall paintings and sculpture from that formative period. Unfortunately, almost all of the great Buddhist wooden temples, their wall paintings and carved images, which are described in texts as being among the wonders of the Buddhist world, were destroyed in various Buddhist persecutions or in later conflagrations. Nonetheless, those examples of Buddhist sculpture and painting that have survived provide a tantalizing glimpse of many important Chinese iconographical innovations. A proper understanding of those innovations is essential to the study of the influence of Chinese Buddhism on developments in Korea and Japan.

In China, calligraphy and painting have always been considered foremost among the arts. Inscriptions carved on oracle bones and cast in bronze ritual vessels furnish important examples of the earliest forms of Chinese calligraphy. By the beginning of the Christian Era, the other script-forms had already evolved. It is some indication of the creativity of later Chinese calligraphers that they continued to utilize those traditional script-forms and yet were able to develop distinct personal styles. Recognized masters of calligraphy are mentioned in early Chinese literature and a specialized critical vocabulary soon emerged to describe their innovations. That same vocabulary, with necessary modifications, was subsequently employed by Chinese critics in writing about painting.

The earliest Chinese paintings, depicting legendary heroes, meritorious officials or paragons of filial piety, were didactic in tone and strongly Confucian in flavor. The great figure painters of the T'ang dynasty attained a pinnacle of realism that influenced, and was in turn refined by, the masters of Southern T'ang (937-975). Subsequent developments in the Northern Sung (960-1126) resulted in the emergence of landscape as the major subject matter of avant-garde artists. The achievements of Southern Sung (1127-1279) painters are epitomized in their characteristic atmosphere-laden landscapes.

In contrast to the idyllic landscapes of Southern Sung, paintings by Yüan dynasty (1279-1368) masters have a more intellectual emphasis. Past traditions, not Nature, was the theme that attracted most of them, and their achievements opened a direction in Chinese art history that had no parallels in the West until the twentieth century. Artists of the Ming (1368-1644) and Ch'ing (1644-1911) dynasties were equally aware of and influenced by earlier traditions; but, although the subject matter of their paintings was traditional, their interpretations are imbued with a compelling freshness and vitality.

Of all the arts of China, the production of ceramics has the longest continuous history. From the handsome painted earthenware funerary urns of neolithic times to the refined and delicate porcelains of the eighteenth century, an unbroken series of fine wares reveals a constant striving for improvement and for the perfection of each new technique. Major milestones in this progress are: the fine white stoneware of the Shang dynasty, the appearance of glazes in Shang and their evolution in the late Chou and Han, the use of vari-colored soft glazes in T'ang, the achievement of pure white porcelain in the late T'ang, the wide variety of high-fired feldspathic monochrome glazes in Sung, and in Yüan and Ming the perfection of techniques for decorating white porcelains in underglaze blue and red. The final step, begun in Ming and brought to its ultimate refinement in Ch'ing, was that of decorating these same wares over the glaze in colored enamels.

Lacquer as an artistic medium was a Chinese invention. As early as the Shang dynasty, the sap of the lacquer tree was painted on wood as a protective covering. In the late Eastern Chou and Han, lacquer vessels with painted designs reflected the dominance of contemporary bronzes with gold and silver inlay. Similarly, unadorned lacquer vessels of the Sung dynasty were an attempt to imitate contemporary monochrome ceramic wares. It was with the immaculately carved lacquers of the Yüan and early Ming dynasties that the medium came into its own. On these examples, the smooth, rounded surfaces of the carving and the seemingly deep cutting belie the extreme intractability of the material and the fact that a depth of a mere eighth of an inch has been painstakingly built up with tens of layers of lacquer.

In every phase of their creative endeavor, Chinese artists successfully made innovations that were obviously indebted to past traditions yet, at the same time, were viable and original. Regardless of the medium in which they worked, Chinese artists attained a degree of ingenuity and technical excellence that is unsurpassed.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *chüeh* 56.19
Inscription of pictograph under handle
Shang dynasty, middle Anyang period, 12th c. B.C.
H. 19.7 cm. (7¾ in.); W. 16.7 cm. (6½ in.)

The *chüeh*, a vessel used to heat and pour ceremonial wine, was apparently one of the earliest forms to be cast in bronze. This fully developed example, with its rounded body, flaring lip and spout, and three blade-like legs, is indicative of the sophisticated elegance attained by Shang bronze artisans. Two *t'ao-t'ieh* masks with *lei-wen* comprise the main decoration. Three thin segmented flanges and the simple curved handle separate the design into quarters. Above the main band of decoration are seven rising blades of varying heights, conforming to the curve of the lip and length of the spout. Two cone-capped columns appear on the rim of the *chüeh*.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *ho* 42.1
Shang dynasty, middle Anyang period, 12th c. B.C.
H. 18.5 cm. (7¼ in.); W. 21.0 cm. (8¼ in.)

The *ho* was a wine container fitted with a pouring spout. This example is unusual because of the human face that appears on the lid. The main decoration on the body of the vessel are the clawed appendages and the serpentine coil, with a concentric rectangle and triangle pattern, that winds around the *ho*. On the upper zone, two birds flank the serpentine coil at the point where it joins the face on the lid. Two *k'uei* dragons enframe the pouring spout. A pair of pierced lugs on the body of the vessel are aligned with openings in the ears on the lid. The surface of the vessel is covered with a smooth, gray-green patina with small areas of malachite encrustation.

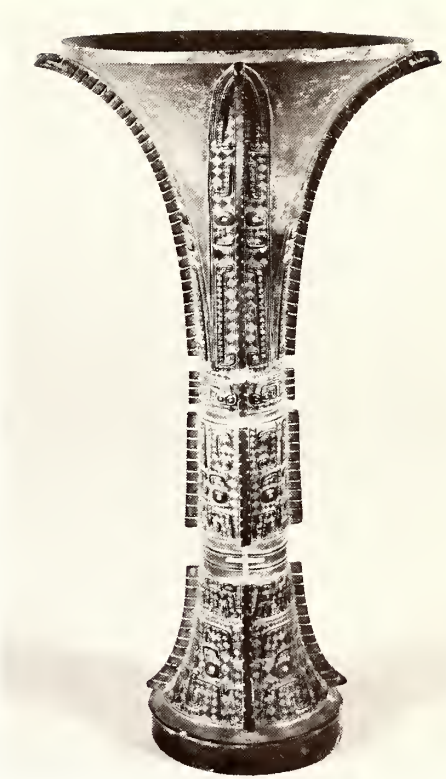
Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *ting* 59.15
Shang dynasty, middle Anyang period, 12th c. B.C.
H. 20.4 cm. (8 in.); W. 16.7 cm. (6⅝ in.)

The *ting*, or tripod, served as a container for sacrificial food. On this example, the surface of the bowl-shaped body is covered with a network of diamonds, each of which contains a boss surrounded by elongated *lei-wen*. Below the rim, a band of *k'uei* dragons separated by short segmented flanges, are arranged in double confronting pairs. An even grayish-green patina covers the entire vessel; the fossae of the design are filled with black pigment and some earthy encrustation remains. The inscription, which consists of two characters and a pictogram, was etched in at a later date.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *kuei* 41.8
Inscription of pictograph inside the bottom
Shang dynasty, middle-late Anyang period, 12th-11th c. B.C.
H. 21.2 cm. (8⅜ in.); W. 13.9 cm. (5½ in.)

Of the various bronze ritual vessels that were used as sacrificial food containers, the *kuei* underwent an especially unusual development. During the Shang dynasty, many *kuei*, such as the Freer example, consisted of a simple bowl shape placed on a ring foot. Occasionally Shang *kuei* were fitted with two handles. In early Western Chou, *kuei* became considerably more elaborate, often having four handles and standing on a high square base. On this classic Shang example in the Freer collection, thin segmented flanges divide the surface of the vessel into six vertical sections. *T'ao-t'ieh* masks, *k'uei* dragons and cicadas form the main decoration. Finely cast *lei-wen* covers most of the vessel and the patina is uniformly gray-green.

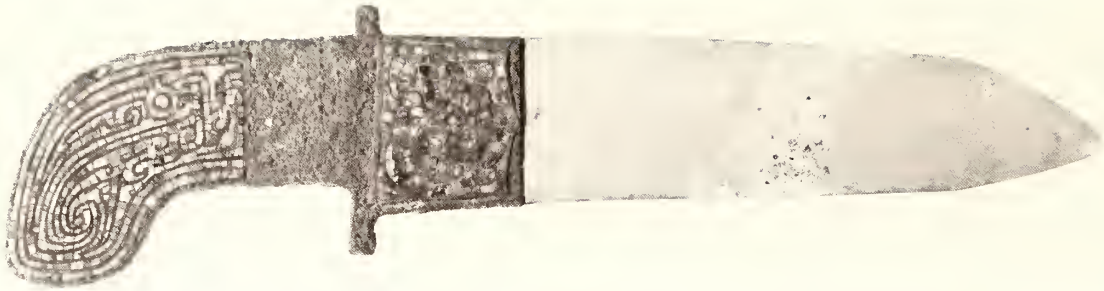
Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *ku* 51.18
Inscription of pictograph inside the base
Shang dynasty, middle-late Anyang period, 12th-11th c. B.C.
H. 33.0 cm. (13 in.); W. 19.0 cm. (7½ in.)



The *ku*, which served as a ceremonial goblet, was one of the earliest Chinese ritual vessels to be cast in bronze. The shape of this large, elaborately decorated *ku* contrasts with those of short, thick-bodied early examples that were closely related to pottery prototypes. The casting of the *t'ao-t'ieh* masks, *k'uei* dragons and *lei-wen* ground is exceptionally fine; the entire surface is covered with a uniform gray-green patina. Each of the four vertical flanges segments the design into distinct zones, thereby emphasizing the quadripartite division of the decor. This emphasis is in conformity with the late Shang taste for architectonic form.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *ho* 36.6
Shang dynasty, late Anyang period, 11th c. B.C.
H. 17.5 cm. (6⅞ in.); W. 21.3 cm. (8⅜ in.)

In addition to decorating bronze ritual vessels with a variety of hybrid animal motifs, Shang artisans also cast a number of vessels in animal form. The realistically modelled elephant, with the raised trunk serving as a spout and a miniature elephant providing a handle for the lid, is an important example of Shang sculpture. In contrast to the realism of the overall shape, the fragmented designs that cover the body are derived from familiar motifs found on Shang vessels. The dissolution of such standard motifs as the *t'ao-t'ieh* mask supports a late Shang date for the elephant *ho*.



Bronze and jade ceremonial dagger-axe, *ko* 41.5
Shang dynasty, late Anyang period, 11th c. B.C.
L. 41.9 cm. (16½ in.)

The *ko*, or dagger-axe, is the most common type of ancient Chinese weapon now known. Ceremonial replicas of the more sturdy bronze prototypes were occasionally made with turquoise-inlaid tesserae inset into frets which were cast with the handle. The perforated tang or shafting plate is heavily patinated with cuprite and malachite. This *ko*, which is similar to several examples found at Anyang in Honan province, may also have been unearthed at that site.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *kuei* 68.29
Inscription of thirty-four characters inside the body
Early Western Chou, late 11th c. B.C.
H. 23.5 cm. (9¼ in.); D. 37.5 cm. (14¾ in.)
Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer

This ritual bronze vessel, the *T'ai-pao kuei*, has four massive handles surmounted by horned bovine heads with dependent winged bodies. The main decoration on the vessel consists of two *t'ao-t'ieh* masks. Four *k'uei* dragons in rounded relief ornament the register above the plain base. The *T'ai-pao kuei* is one of the most famous bronze ritual vessels assigned to the early Western Chou period. Together with six other bronze vessels, the *kuei* is said to have been unearthed at Liang-shan in Shou-chang Hsien, Shantung province, sometime before 1843. The thirty-four character inscription, cast inside the body of the *kuei*, may be rendered: "The King undertook a punitive expedition against Sheng, Lord of Lu, who had rebelled. The King charged the *T'ai-pao* with the order to attack. The *T'ai-pao* reverently obeyed the King's charge without fault. The King received the *T'ai-pao* and graciously granted him the land of Hsü. The *T'ai-pao* has used this vessel in order to record the king's charge." It is generally agreed that the King is Ch'eng Wang, who reigned ca. 1024-1005 B.C., while the *T'ai-pao* ("Grand Protector") refers to Shih, the Duke of Shao.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *fang-i* 30.54
Inscription of 187 characters on inside of lid and 188 characters on bottom of vessel
Early Western Chou, late 11th-early 10th c. B.C.
H. 35.6 cm. (14 in.); W. 24.7 cm. (9¾ in.)

The basic shape and ornamentation of the *fang-i*, a ritual food container, were developed during the Shang dynasty. Examples dating from early Western Chou are characterized by flamboyant elaboration of the contours of the vessels, as well as of such details as the pierced hooked flanges and the gradual dissolution of the *t'ao-t'ieh* masks. This *fang-i*, part of the Nieh-ling set, is said to have been found at Loyang in 1929. All features of the decor support the early Western Chou date indicated by the long inscription, which mentions a king (presumably K'ang Wang), Ming-pao (son of the Duke of Chou), and the Annalist Nieh-ling, who commissioned the vessel.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *yu* 30.26
Early Western Chou, 11th c. B.C.
H. 51.0 cm. (20-1/16 in.)

This covered *yu*, a ceremonial wine container, is virtually identical to a *yu* included in the so-called "second Pao-chi set," said to have been found in ancient Chou territory in Shensi province some time between 1914 and 1918. The relationship of the Freer *yu* with the Pao-chi bronze is of importance since it raises the possibility that the *yu* may have been cast in Shensi by Chou bronze artisans before the conquest of Shang. The exceptionally heavy flanges, the extensions which terminate as bovine masks on the long axis of the cover, and the four beams that emerge from the vertical fluted band reflect an aesthetic quite different from that evidenced on Shang bronzes from Anyang. Equally distinctive are the antler-like crests of the large birds on the vessel.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *yu* 47.12
Inscription of three characters inside cover and vessel
Early Western Chou, late 11th-early 10th c. B.C.
H. 22.9 cm. (9 in.); W. 22.8 cm. (9 in.)

The rounded contours of the *yu* and the gracefulness of the paired-bird designs form a distinct contrast with the spiky silhouettes and formidable ornamentation that are characteristic of many late Shang and early Western Chou bronze vessels. Experimentation with bird motifs during the transitional period between Shang and Chou eventually resulted in truly elegant forms that are representative of a uniquely Chou aesthetic. Bird motifs played an important role in bronze decor throughout the Western Chou period. In the early phase, as represented by this *yu*, each bird occupies a separate part of the bronze surface. The bodies of the birds contrast with the narrower serrated strands rising from the crests and with the upswept wings. Gradually, the individual elements of the design became broader and more abstract, until, at the end of Western Chou, all that remained of the original motif was the central boss—the last vestige of the bird's eye—from which emerged a pair of flattened curving bands.

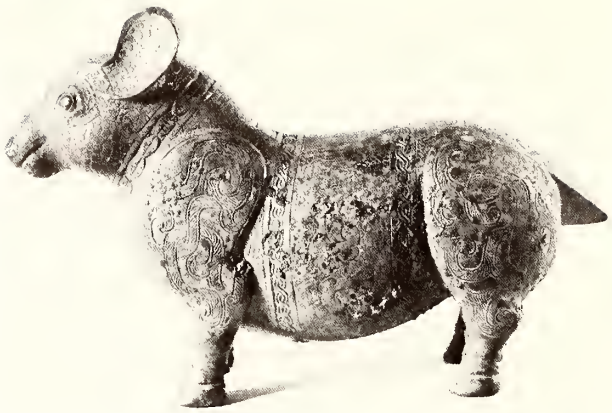
Bronze tiger 35.21
Western Chou, 9th c. B.C.
L. 75.2 cm. (29⅝ in.); H. 25.2 cm. (9⅞ in.)

The tiger's gaping jaws and curled talons lend an intense ferocity to its appearance. Broad, raised ornamental bands, closely related to designs found on ritual bronzes dating from the same period, cover the body, suggesting the actual striping of a tiger's coat. Equally indicative of the artist's close observation of nature is the subtle undulating contour of the back. Seen in silhouette, the contour swells over the shoulders and haunches, dips in the center, and finally culminates in a taut curl at the end of the tail. A rectangular opening on the back of the tiger suggests that the animal may have been used as a structural support. The tiger, one of a pair in the collection, is said to have been found in Pao-chi Hsien, Shensi province.

Bronze juggler 51.7
Eastern Chou, 6th-5th c. B.C.
H. 16.4 cm. (6½ in.); W. 5.3 cm. (2⅛ in.)

The juggler stands with his right knee bent, left arm raised and head turned to one side. The right arm supports a pole atop which a bear is balancing. The summary modelling of the figure, somewhat relieved by incised linear decoration and the slightly more plastic handling of the sword fastened with a belt at the back, contrasts with the sensitive articulation of the small bear curled precariously at the top of the pole. The vivid animation of the bear reflects the Chinese concern for animal sculpture from earliest times, while the ungainly stance of the juggler betrays a still undeveloped ability in depicting the human figure.

Bronze quadruped 40.23
Eastern Chou, 6th-5th c. B.C.
H. 11.5 cm. (4½ in.); L. 18.2 cm. (7-3/16 in.)



The slightly rotund quadruped stands firmly on four short legs. The surface of the body is almost entirely covered with pebbling and scales of various sizes, probably intended to indicate roughly textured skin; special emphasis is placed on such details as the muzzle, ears and hooves. The collar of cowrie shells, the two bands encircling the body and the narrower band running along the back from the nose to the tail are suggestive of harness fittings, while the intertwined striated bands that ornament the fore and hind quarters are apparently purely decorative. The elements of the decoration are related to those on bronzes found at Li-yü in northern Shansi in 1923. Further support for a Shansi provenance for the Freer quadruped came in 1965, when an example with identical ornamentation and of approximately the same size was unearthed at Ch'ang-chih, Shansi province.

Bronze bell, type *chung* 41.9
Eastern Chou, 5th c. B.C.
H. 66.4 cm. (26⅛ in.); W. 47.0 cm. (18½ in.)

The *chung* is a well-known type of clapperless bell, many examples of which were cast during the latter part of the Eastern Chou period. This bell, originally part of a set, is ellipsoidal in section, and the upper two-thirds of the surface is divided into four vertical quadrants by a space between the two quadrants on either side. Each quadrant is divided into five registers, of which the bottom, central and top registers each contains a row of three bosses representing coiled serpents with feline heads. The other two dividing registers contain the characteristic interlaced band design of the period, which also appears on each side of the central portion of the lower third of the bell. Some indication of the extraordinary technical skill of Chinese bronze artisans is apparent in the intricate details of the two crested birds that form the suspending device atop the bell. The fine intaglio designs that cover the bodies of the birds, the definition of their outspread wings and the elaborate interlaced band patterns of the ground are a tour de force of piece-mold casting.

Bronze ceremonial vessel, type *chien* 39.5
Inscription of six characters on the inside
Eastern Chou, first half of the 5th c. B.C.
H. 22.8 cm. (9 in.); W. 51.7 cm. (20⅜ in.)

The large basin has four handles topped by monster masks, while loose flattened rings with intaglio decoration depend from two of them. The surface is divided into three principal zones, each decorated with interlocking bands covered with small spirals and triangles in intaglio and with raised curls and dragon heads. A band of cowries appears on the outer edge of the lip of the vessel, and a braided rope motif separates the principal decorative bands. All of these decorative motifs are characteristic of late developments in the Li-yü style, which evolved in the State of Chin. That interpretation is supported by the inscription incised inside the basin, which refers to the Chih family of the State of Chin. Since the State of Chin was extinguished in 453 B.C., the inscription provides a *terminus ad quem* for the vessel.

Bronze vessel, type *tou* 39.41
Late Eastern Chou, 4th c. B.C.
H. 15.5 cm. (6⅛ in.); W. 18.7 cm. (7⅜ in.)

The compact spherical shape of the vessel is formed by a rounded bowl on a splayed stem foot and a domed lid with a low flaring knob, which also serves as a foot when the lid is inverted. There are two annular handles at either side. The gold inlay decoration, based almost entirely on a single stylized dragon motif, is a transformation of the earlier bronze relief decor into a new medium. In 1965, a *tou*, virtually identical in size and ornamentation with the Freer example, was unearthed in a tomb at Ch'ang-chih, Shansi province. The sumptuous inlay designs on that vessel and on the Freer *tou* retain only a slight relationship with the bold motifs found on earlier Chou bronze vessels and nothing of the awesome ferocity so characteristic of Shang hybrid creatures. The outspoken secular aspect of such late Chou bronze vessels is indicative of a break with earlier bronze decoration. The inlay patterns, with their admirable variety and inventiveness, were to be the final innovation in a tradition that had begun approximately 1,000 years earlier.

Bronze vessel, type *pien-hu* 15.103
Late Eastern Chou, late 4th-early 3rd c. B.C.
H. 31.2 cm. (12¼ in.); W. 30.5 cm. (12 in.)

This type of vessel, of flattened form and known as *pien-hu*, makes its appearance near the end of the Chou dynasty, probably around 400 B.C. On this example, a geometrical design inlaid with silver is disposed symmetrically over the flat surfaces of the vessel. The artisan abandoned any attempt at plasticity, his primary concern being to enrich the surface of the vessel with an intricate inlay design composed of fine spirals, hooks and volutes, and bands of varying width. Although the design is highly stylized, references to earlier zoomorphic forms, such as the *t'ao-t'ieh* mask, the *k'uei* dragon and birds, can still be detected. Similar ornamentation is inlaid on the neck, the foot and the narrow sides of the vessel. The only concession to plasticity are the conventional animal mask escutcheons with pendant loose rings on the shoulder.

Bronze terminal ornament 32.14
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
L. 25.5 cm. (10-1/16 in.)

The terminal ornament modelled in the form of a dragon head has a square hole at the top, probably to hold a cotter pin for attachment to another member, perhaps to the end of a chariot pole. The bronze is overlaid with gold and engraved with curvilinear designs that are somewhat obscured by patination. The teeth and eyeballs are overlaid with silver, while the pupils of the eyes are of glass. A small loop under the lower jaw may have served for suspension of a tassel. The terminal ornament, probably the front finial of the shaft of a funeral chariot, is said to have been excavated in one of the horse pits near the entrance of a princely tomb at Chin-ts'un, near Loyang in Honan province.

Bronze mirror 36.3
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
D. 19.5 cm. (7-11/16 in.)

The reverse of the mirror is a single flat surface from which rises a central pierced hemispherical boss. The mirror would have been held by means of a silken tassel passing through the boss. Six fantastic serpentine creatures, alternately inlaid with gold and silver, are symmetrically intertwined in the main field of decoration. A gold and silver pattern of volutes and triangles, characteristic of the late Eastern Chou period, is inlaid in the outer band. The designs are closely related to those found on objects unearthed at Chin-ts'un in Honan province.

Belt hooks

(a) Bronze covered with gold sheet 49.24
Late Eastern Chou, 3rd c. B.C.
L. 10.3 cm. (4-1/16 in.)

(b) Bronze inlaid with gold and silver 49.6
Late Eastern Chou, ca. 300-250 B.C.
L. 12.3 cm. (4⅞ in.); W. 6.0 cm. (2⅜ in.)

(c) Jade with gold mounting 54.120
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
L. 12.3 cm. (4-13/16 in.); W. 2.5 cm. (1 in.)

Belt hooks are believed to have been adopted by the Chinese from their nomadic northern neighbors. A belt hook is essentially a plaque of bronze, iron, jade or other material, furnished with a button on the back for attachment to one end of the belt and terminates in a hook devised to engage the other end of the belt. The earliest excavated examples can be dated to ca. 500 B.C.; they apparently went out of fashion in the first century A.D. The heyday of the belt hook was in the Warring States period, from which have survived specimens testifying to the skill, the inventiveness and the keen sense of design of late Eastern Chou craftsmen. The gold designs inlaid on (a) and (b) are sophisticated adaptations of motifs found on bronze vessels of the period. Equally handsome is the carved jade and gold belt hook, said to have been unearthed at Shou-hsien in Anhui province.

Bronze incense burner, *po-shan hsiang-lu* 47.15
Late Eastern Chou-early Western Han, 4th-3rd c. B.C.
H. 17.9 cm. (7-1/16 in.); W. 10.0 cm. (3-15/16 in.)

The conical cover of the incense burner is in the form of twelve mountain peaks surrounding a thirteenth peak. The rim of the cover, as well as the surface and stem of the bowl, are decorated with abstract patterns inlaid with gold and silver. Similar abstract inlaid gold and silver patterns along the edges of the mountain peaks are meant to indicate swirling clouds, providing an instructive example of how Chinese artisans utilized traditional abstract motifs as they sought to develop ways of representing such evanescent phenomena as billowing clouds, flickering flames and swirling water. Miniature scenes of human figures and contesting animals are cast in low relief on the lower peaks, with animal fur and foliage indicated by inlaid silver hatching. Turquoise and carnelian insets ornament the entire incense burner.

Bronze chimera 61.3
Han dynasty, 206 B.C.-A.D. 221
H. 19.3 cm. (7⅝ in.); L. 36.6 cm. (14⅜ in.)

The horned chimera is depicted in mid-stride, head erect and wings furled at the sides. The subtle modelling of the body and facial features contrasts with the sharp-edged concave and convex surfaces of wings, tail and fur appendages, and imbues the creature with a powerful sense of vitality. While revealing little of the actual physical structure beneath, the essentially curvilinear ornamentation incised over the entire surface of the sculpture adds further to the vibrant energy that is characteristic of Han dynasty sculpture.

Bronze covered box, *lien* 51.2
Han dynasty, late 1st c. B.C.-1st c. A.D.
H. 14.2 cm. (5-9/16 in.); D. 15.5 cm. (6⅛ in.)

The circular covered vessel has a loose ring attached to the center of the lid. Inside is a shallow removable tray about an inch deep. The incised technique, which evidently consisted of cutting into the surface of the cold bronze with a burin or chisel, is itself a departure from the normal Chinese mode of decorating bronze. The "feather" pattern of overlapping semi-circles enclosing a scroll, the criss-cross pattern, and the dog tooth triangles link the *lien* unquestionably to a group of bronzes with similar motives and of similar chased decoration. These bronzes belong to a tradition which flourished in southwestern China (Hunan, Kueichou, Kuangsi and Kuangtung) in the late first century B.C.-first century A.D.

Bronze wine warmer 51.5
Western Han dynasty, 1st c. B.C.
H. 17.8 cm. (7 in.); W. 25.4 cm. (10 in.)

The cylindrical vessel is supported by three feet in the shape of crouching bears, while the surface is covered with two horizontal bands showing fabulous beasts and birds in a mountainous landscape. The design is in rather high relief, evidently cast in the rough and then finished with tooling, chiselling and incising of exceptional skill. The animals and demons are in several levels, which appear to indicate both height and distance. The overlapping of planes is elaborately and effectively managed, with animals emerging from behind hills. Vessels of this shape and size are identified as wine warmers by the inscriptions on a pair of similar containers dated 26 B.C. recently excavated in north China.

Bronze mirror 39.38
Eastern Han dynasty, dated A.D. 174
D. 18.2 cm. (7-3/16 in.)

Eight feline heads placed within the four points and outside the concave sides of the central square form the prominent decorative elements of this mirror. Boldly sweeping abstract lines with small spiral accents echo the curvilinear rhythms which define the animals' features and striped manes. The central hemispherical knob is elaborately fashioned of two coiled winged creatures. A forty-seven character inscription cast in a band outside the central design is dated in correspondence with A.D. 174. An even black patina covers the surface of the mirror.

Bronze mirror 54.22
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
D. 24.5 cm. (9⅝ in.)

A winged horse, a *ch'i-lin*, two phoenixes and floral designs executed in repoussé and gilded silver on a ring-punched background decorate the back of the eight-lobed mirror. The tense arched floral tendrils radiating out from the central knob, as well as the animated stances of the mythical creatures impart a sense of movement and vitality to the design. The face of the mirror is bronze with heavy green patina.

Silver container 30.50
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 4.6 cm. (1-13/16 in.); W. 8.0 cm. (3⅛ in.)

Containers in the form of clam shells were popular during the T'ang dynasty. The extreme naturalism of the interior of these shells suggests that they might have been cast with molds made from real shells. The exterior designs consist of an elaborately plumed peacock and phoenix respectively standing atop a blossom, with curving vines, stylized flowers and birds surrounding the central motif. A swirling foliate border encloses the outside of each shell. The ornamentation is chased on a ring-punched ground. Luxurious trinkets of this type reflect the degree of sophistication of Chinese culture during the mid-T'ang period.

Silver cup 30.51
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 06.4 cm. (2½ in.); D. 07.8 cm. (3-1/16 in.)

Small cups with handles were frequently made in silver during the T'ang dynasty. The designs on the flaring sides of the cup are divided into registers. Grape clusters and leaves framed by curvilinear tendrils border the main register where animals and birds move animatedly through more elaborate grape cluster and leaf designs. The handle is formed by a small "c"-shaped ring partially covered by elongated leaves. The pattern, chased on a ground of regular ring matting, is covered with gilt.

Silver covered box 30.39
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 6.4 cm. (2½ in.); D. 5.0 cm. (2 in.)

During the T'ang dynasty, under Hellenistic influence, Chinese artisans made extensive use of floral and fruit forms, both as shapes and ornamentation. This miniature covered box is modelled in the shape of an eight-lobed melon. Plain gold bands demarcate the sections, which are decorated with gilded grape clusters and leaves enclosed by curving vines. The silver ring-punched background enhances the gilded surface of the elegantly worked design. The knob on the lid is modelled in the shape of a frog-like creature.

Silver bowl 31.8
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 5.5 cm. (2-3/16 in.); D. 14.5 cm. (5-11/16 in.)

The bowl is in the shape of an open lotus flower with the petals embossed around the sides. Each petal is decorated with a symmetrical floral design raised on a ring-punched ground; the raised designs are gilded. Birds and animals interspersed with plant forms ornament the outer edge of the flaring lip. The lotus as a decorative motif was imported from India with Buddhism. It remained a predominantly Buddhist motif until the sixth century, but became increasingly secularized during the T'ang dynasty. The extraordinarily meticulous detail on the bowl provides some indication of the high level of Chinese metal craftsmanship during the mid-T'ang period.

Gold apsaras 46.20 and 46.21
T'ang dynasty, 8th c.
H. 3.7 cm. (1-7/16 in.); L. 8.8 cm. (3½ in.)

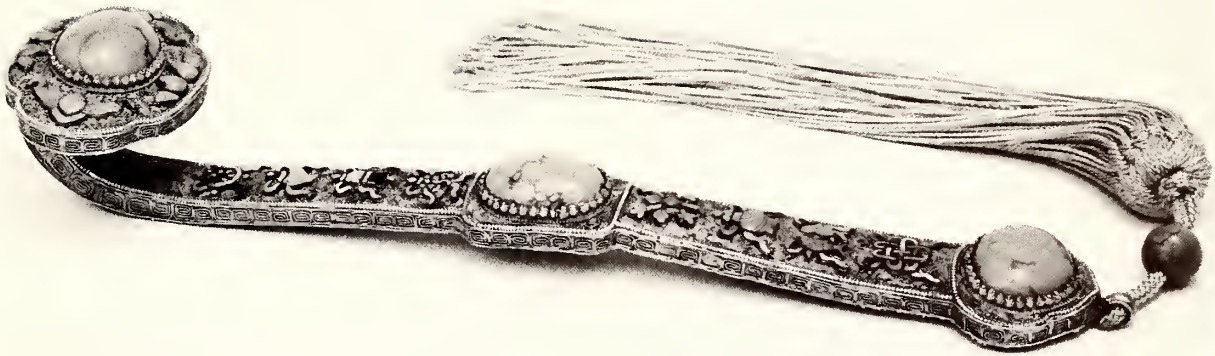
This pair of apsaras, or Buddhist heavenly beings, probably parts of an elaborate altar set, are fine examples of T'ang dynasty workmanship. Each figure is made of sheet gold with a hollow interior, and the several parts are soldered together. Gold streamers, ribbons and beaded ruffs are attached to the figures. The stylized curvilinear cloud formations on which the apsaras are born aloft echo the fluttering lines of the floating scarves and streamers to imbue the figures with a sense of buoyant movement.

Silver ladle 44.58
T'ang dynasty, 8th c.
L. 31.2 cm. (12-5/16 in.)

While many foreign influences appear in T'ang dynasty silver artifacts, some new forms and ornaments undoubtedly were introduced by Chinese silversmiths. The seven-lobed oval bowl, ending in a point, does not seem to have prototypes in western Asia. Therefore the shape must tentatively be accepted as Chinese in origin. The handle of the ladle is flat and curving, terminating in a bird's head. Incised ornamentation is restricted to the outside of the bowl and the front surface of the handle. Regular ring matting provides a rich background texture for the floral design.

Gold covered jar 52.29
Ming dynasty, 15th c.
H. 9.2 cm. (3⅝ in.); D. 9.1 cm. (3-9/16 in.)

This jar is one of a set of eight gold objects which are said to have come from the tomb of the Hsüan-te emperor (reigned 1426-35). In addition to the incised pattern of dragons among clouds, there are a number of jewel settings symmetrically arranged on the jar and cover. These jewels include uncut rubies, sapphires and irregularly shaped pearls. The rather crude settings for the jewels appear un-Chinese and it has been suggested that the technique reflects Tibetan influence.



Gold and turquoise *ju-i* 37.45
Ch'ing dynasty, Ch'ien-lung period (1736-95)
L. 24.0 cm. (9½ in.)

This *ju-i*, originally one of a set of eighteen gold objects designed for use on the Imperial desk and presented to the Ch'ien-lung emperor by a Manchu official in 1783, is redolent of good wishes. The *ju-i* (literally "as you wish") is a sceptre-like object often held by Manjusri when debating with Vimalakirti in early Buddhist art. Perhaps by virtue of its auspicious name, it became a favorite motif in the decorative arts in the Ch'ing dynasty. This sceptre is fashioned of gold sheets, covered front and back with a curvilinear fern design executed in filigree, and outlined at the corners by beaded wire. The three large turquoise inlays are set in repoussé-decorated bezels, the one on the larger end being surrounded by bats and peaches, symbols of happiness and long life. The handle of the sceptre is decorated with turquoise inlays of the Eight Buddhist Emblems: the Wheel, Conch Shell, Umbrella, Canopy, Lotus, Vase, Paired Fish and Endless Knot.

Cloisonné incense burner 61.12
Ming dynasty, 16th c.
H. 14.0 cm. (5½ in.); D. 19.0 cm. (7½ in.)

A common sixteenth-century cloisonné shape is this incense burner, derived from the ancient ritual bronze *ting* but more squat and with shorter legs than its fifteenth-century counterparts. Usually the rim was plain; but often, as here, the simple rim was removed and replaced by a more elaborate rim cast during the Ch'ing dynasty. The fitted gilt feet are also later additions. The incense burner is covered with floral and fruit designs in red, white, blue, green, yellow and aubergine cloisonné enamels.

Cloisonné vase 11.145
Ch'ing dynasty, K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722)
H. 30.8 cm. (12⅛ in.)

The vase is made in the shape of a Shang dynasty ceremonial *ku* vessel. Floral ornamentation with archaistic *t'ao-t'ieh* masks in light blue, dark blue, green, red, yellow and white cloisonné enamels decorate the surface. A separate pierced flower holder fits inside the mouth of the vase. An eight-character inscription cast in relief inside the foot rim states that the vase was made during the K'ang-hsi period by Wang Tzu-fan. Since cloisonné pieces with K'ang-hsi period marks are extremely rare, this vase is of importance in dating unmarked examples.

Jade ceremonial battle-axe disk, *pi* 68.48
Shang dynasty, late Anyang period, 11th c.
D. 22.5 cm. (8⅞ in.)
Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer

The composite shape of this type of ceremonial jade may be derived from the ritual *pi* disk and the utilitarian bronze *ch'i* battle-axe. Pairs of six-toothed flanges on either side of the disk are neatly bevelled from the flat surface. The lower flaring edge is also bevelled. The overall shape of the disk, as well as the refined carving of such purely aesthetic details as the flanges, are eloquent reminders of sophisticated Shang dynasty taste.

White marble bird 40.2
Shang dynasty, late Anyang period, 11th c. B.C.
H. 11.8 cm. (4⅝ in.)

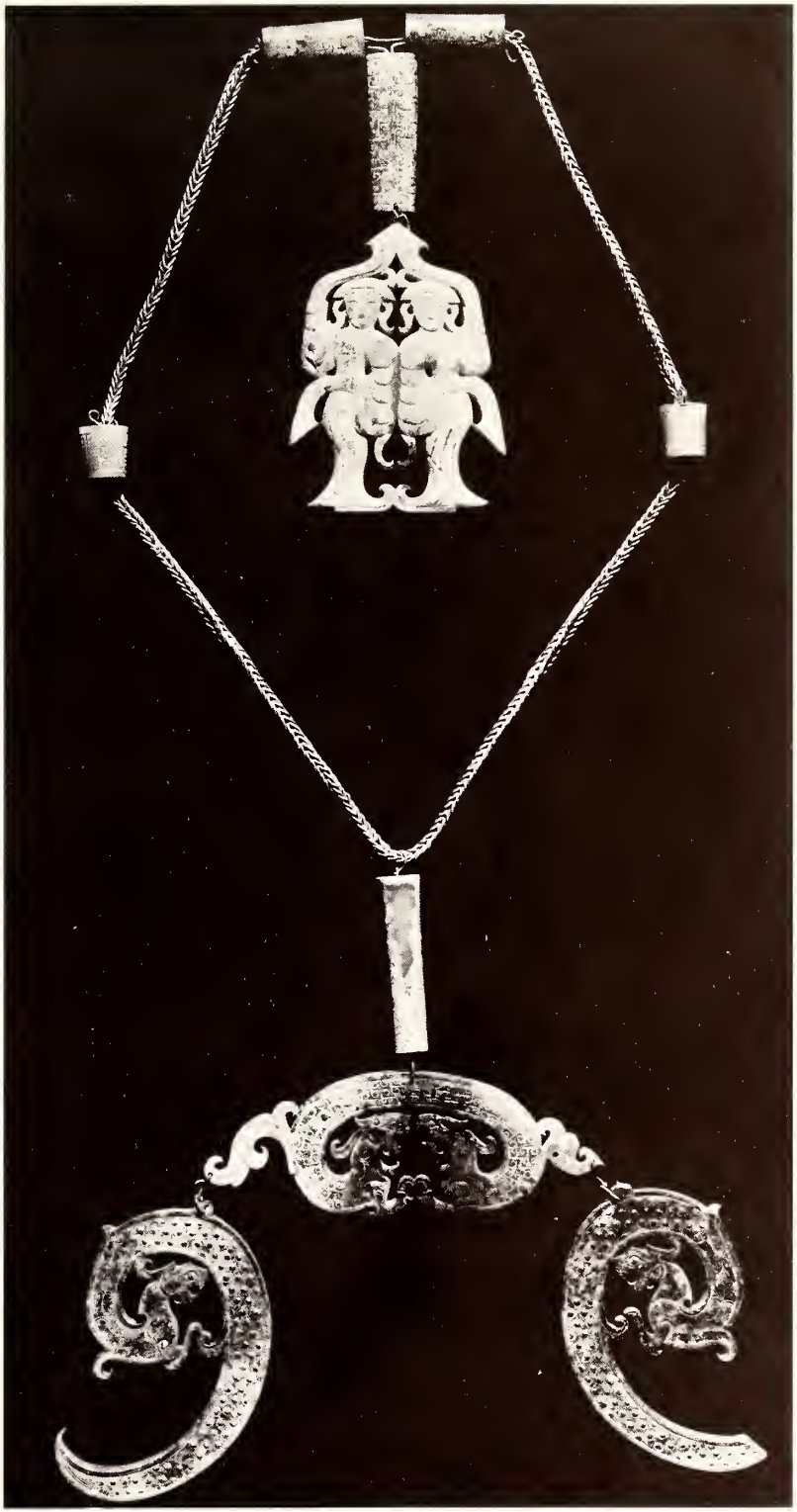
Marble was a material used by the Shang people at their capital at Anyang, and a number of monumental sculptures, probably pillar bases and other architectural members, have been found there. This crested bird in silhouette was probably made as a terminal ornament; a perforation beneath the claw allowed a pin to pass through to hold the carving securely in place. Ornamental details of the bird are formed of parallel incised lines rather than stand in relief. This type of bird appears often in Shang dynasty carvings, as, for example, on bone hairpins.

Jade human head 53.9
Early Western Chou, late 11th-10th c. B.C.
L. 4.6 cm. (1-13/16 in.); W. 4.1 cm. (1-9/16 in.)

This carving belongs to a small group of anthropomorphic representations of forbidding aspect, having bulging eyes, bulbous nose, bared teeth and pierced ear lobes; they may be representations of shamans or demons. The human figure occurs much less frequently than animals in Shang and Chou art, and its precise significance has yet to be determined. An early Western Chou date is indicated by the modelling of individual features with emphasis on slightly raised outlines, including the vestigial animal forms above the ear plugs. A longitudinal hole running the entire length of the carving behind the face, as well as several other perforations on the concave back suggest that the carving was designed to be fastened to another surface.

Jade ceremonial prism, *ts'ung* 17.63
Western Chou, 1027-771 B.C.
H. 17.5 cm (6⅞ in.); W. 7.7 cm. (3-1/16 in.)

The earth was conceived of as a square in traditional Chinese cosmology, and according to ancient texts, the *ts'ung* was symbolic of Earth. Jade *ts'ung* would have been used in ancient rituals. The characteristic shape is of a tube of square section enclosing a hollow cylinder, although the proportions of known *ts'ung* vary considerably. This example tapers slightly towards the top, has tall projecting collars at both ends, and channeled grooves and incised lines ornamenting the flat outer surfaces.



Jade pectoral 30.27
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
L. 40.7 cm. (16 in.)

Groups of jade carving found together as a composite ornament are quite unusual. These ten pieces of jade are attached to four strands of braided gold wire. A pair of female dancers form the upper section of the pendant, while an oval double-tiger pendant is flanked by single-tiger spirals in the lower section. Conical and cylindrical beads complete the pectoral. The jade pieces are carved in relief and incised on both sides. The assemblage was excavated at Chin-ts'un in Honan province; its present arrangement is not a matter of absolute certainty.

(Illustration on preceding page)

Jade plaque 32.44
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
W. 6.1 cm. (2-7/16 in.); L. 14.8 cm. (5-13/16 in.)

The precise technical skill and keen sense of design characteristic of jade carvings made during the late Chou dynasty are evident in this tiger plaque. Narrow bands enclose and articulate the animal's body. The torso is ornamented with a regular pattern of the comma motif while the head, flanks and tail are adorned with a variety of abstract designs as well as a stylized bird.

Jade disk, *pi* 16.155
Western Han, 2nd c. B.C.
D. 15.2 cm. (6 in.)

Beginning in neolithic times, Chinese artisans produced plain perforated disks, or *pi*, which according to early texts were symbolic of heaven. During the late Chou and Han, the flat surfaces of some *pi* were embellished with geometrically arranged granular designs. On a few more elaborately fashioned examples, such as this one, artisans extended the prescribed shape of the *pi* by adding fantastic serpentine creatures which contrast with the simplicity of the disk itself. The intertwined dragon and feline atop this *pi* are enframed by curling claws and tails.

Jade covered cup 47.10
Late Eastern Chou-early Western Han, 3rd c. B.C.
Overall height: 12.1 cm. (4¾ in.)

Feline animals silhouetted against a background of small spirals ornament the tall cylindrical body of the cup, a late Eastern Chou and Han shape found also in bronze and lacquer. Incised bands enclosing the body of the cup repeat elements found on the felines. These elements, suggestive of both animal forms and pure ornament, are indicative of a late Chou date, while the stylized masks above the three low feet show a greater affinity with Western Han masks in their configuration. Three winged felines adorn the cover.

Jade covered bowl 44.18
Ch'ing dynasty, Ch'ien-lung period (1736-95)
H. 25.0 cm. (9⅞ in.); W. 28.3 cm. (11⅛ in.)

This carved bowl, fashioned in the shape of an archaic bronze vessel *ting*, is a fine example of the astonishingly high level of technical refinement in jade carvings of the Ch'ien-lung period. Vessel, handles, pendent rings and legs are carved from one single boulder. The simple shape of the bowl and cover are complemented by the meticulously carved dragons ornamenting the handles and legs, as well as by the lion surmounting the cover.

Gilt bronze seated Buddha 11.121
Liu Sung dynasty, A.D. 451
H. 29.3 cm. (11-9/16 in.); W. 13.2 cm. (5-3/16 in.)

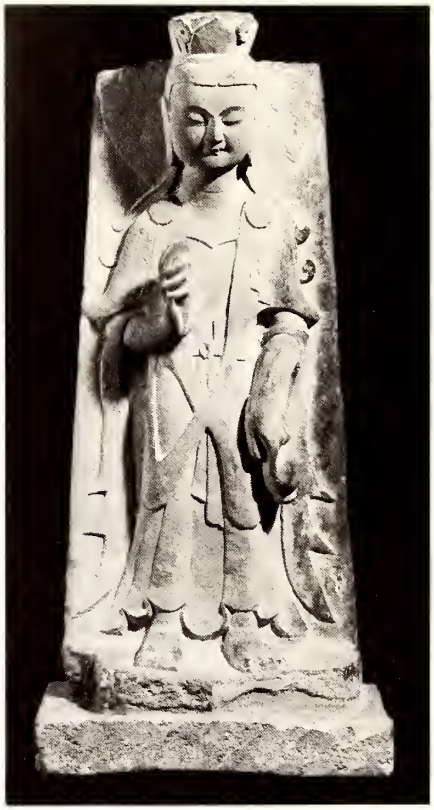
The small gilt bronze Buddha figure, with an inscription dated in correspondence with A.D. 451, is among the earliest surviving Buddhist statues. It is an example of Chinese adaptation of the type of meditating Buddha that first appeared in Gandhara. The treatment of the facial features and drapery folds is more formalized and abstract than the Gandharan prototypes; the head is disproportionately large and the pleats of the robe have been reduced to symmetrically arranged parallel ridges. The mandorla is decorated with three tiny seated Buddhas in low relief, incised kidney-shaped patterns and a flaming border.

Gilt bronze standing Buddha 52.28
Northern Wei dynasty, early 6th c.
H. 35.9 cm. (14⅛ in.); W. 14.4 cm. (5-11/16 in.)

The Buddha stands on a lotus pedestal with the right hand in *abhaya mudrā* and the left in *vara mudrā*. The upward sweep of the mandorla, the attenuated facial features and the elegant linear rhythms of the drapery folds are characteristic of Northern Wei style, a style which successfully incorporates the traditional Chinese predilection for linear movement with a basically static quality of the initial stage of Buddhist sculpture in China. The removable mandorla consists of the halo, which is richly decorated with floral patterns, and a border of dancing flames. Although the statue has no inscription, comparison with dated examples of similar style suggests a date in the third or fourth decade of the sixth century.

Limestone Bodhisattva 52.15
Northern Wei dynasty, early 6th c.
H. 103.4 cm. (40-11/16 in.); W. 41.7 cm. (16-7/16 in.)

The Bodhisattva, probably Maitreya, carries a bottle in the left hand and a lotus-bud in the right. The dynamic silhouette formed by the broad, flat scarves and billowing hem contrasts with the calm, introspective expression on the face of the Bodhisattva. Some indication of the deeply felt faith that characterized early Chinese Buddhist sculpture is evident in the slightly archaic smile which lends a friendly, yet serene quality to the face of the youthful deity. Close similarities with Bodhisattva figures in the Buddhist caves in Kung Hsien, Honan province, suggest a possible provenance for the statue.



Limestone Buddhist stele 68.54
Northern Wei dynasty, ca. 520-530
H. 103.5 cm. (40¾ in.); W. 80.0 cm. (31½ in.)
Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer

The Buddha and two Bodhisattvas on the front of the stele are modelled in high relief. Incised on either side of the Buddha are two standing disciples, Ananda and Kasyapa, above whom are a pair of Buddhas seated in niches. On the back of the stele is an elaborate composition carved in low relief, consisting of a Buddha seated on a lotus throne beneath a baldachin, flanked by two Bodhisattvas and numerous attendant figures. The overall composition of the stele and the style of individual figures are similar to those on a number of other Buddhist steles with inscriptions dating from the period 520-530.

Buddhist donor and attendants 13.72
Northern Wei, early 6th c.
H. 41.0 cm. (16⅛ in.); W. 44.0 cm. (17-5/16 in.)

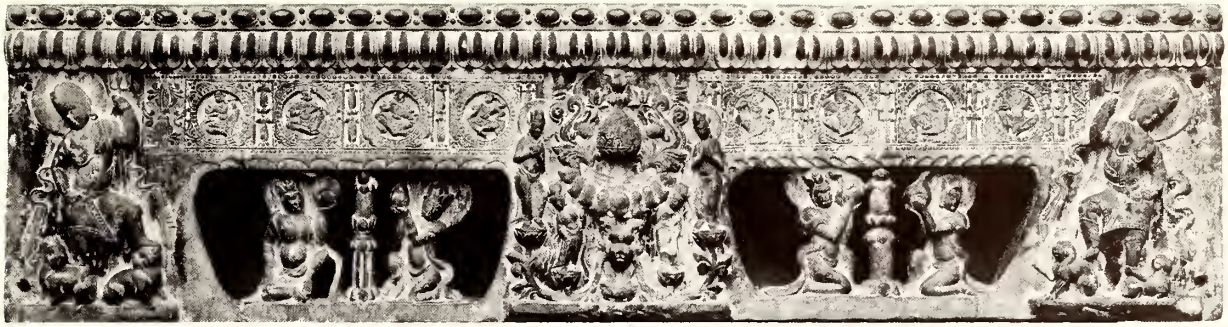
The four figures, originally part of a larger composition, depict a donor accompanied by three attendants carrying fans and an umbrella. Some traces of polychrome are still visible on the surface of the stone. The modelling of the individual figures, as well as details of the headdresses and robes, are similar to those found on reliefs in the well-known Buddhist cave temples at Kung Hsien, in Honan province. It seems likely that the Freer fragment originally was part of one of the wall reliefs at Kung Hsien.

Limestone demon figure 53.86
Northern Ch'i dynasty (550-577)
H. 80.5 cm. (31-11/16 in.); W. 55.7 cm. (21⅞ in.)

Seated demon figures of this type occur as caryatids in the Buddhist caves at Southern Hsiang-t'ang-shan in Hopei province. While the monster mask, wings and sharp talons were undoubtedly meant to evoke a sense of awe in the spectator, the sculptor seems to have tempered the image with a slight suggestion of impious humor.

Limestone reliefs: Scenes from the life of the Buddha, 21.1; Amitabha Paradise, 21.2
Northern Ch'i, dynasty (550-577)
H. 120.8 cm. (47½ in.); L. 338.6 cm. (133 5/16 in.)
H. 158.9 cm. (62½ in.); L. 334.5 cm. (131¾ in.)

These reliefs are said to have come from a cave at Southern Hsiang-t'ang-shan, a site located in Hopei province. The monumental figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and attendants are executed in simple, geometric forms, which contrast with the sumptuously ornate canopies and stylized foliage. All elements of the compositions are arranged in successive stages with some areas deeply undercut so as to create an integrated pictorial unity. Some traces of pigment still remain on the surface of the stone, giving a faint indication of the brilliant vision that would have been seen by faithful Buddhist pilgrims who visited the cave temples. These bas-reliefs reflect the growing importance of the Amitabha sect in the middle of the sixth century.



Limestone funerary couch 15.110
Northern Ch'i dynasty (550-577)
H. 60.0 cm. (23¾ in.); L. 234.0 cm. (92 in.)

The bas-relief decoration which completely covers the surface of the funerary couch is particularly important because of the unusual juxtaposition of Chinese and Central Asian elements. An elaborate incense burner in the center of the composition is flanked on either side by kneeling figures holding flaming jewels and guardians grasping tridents while trampling on lions. These details, in typical Northern Ch'i style, are executed in high relief. By contrast, the figures of dancers and musicians, in pearl-bordered roundels enclosed in squares, are strongly Central Asian in costume and pose. Such a couch would have served as a platform for the sarcophagus in a tomb of an important personage.

(Detail)

Limestone standing Buddha 23.15
Sui dynasty (581-618)
H. 176.0 cm. (69¼ in.); W. 63.5 cm. (25 in.)

The monumental limestone image, completely clothed in a closely fitting monastic robe, is treated as a simple, monolithic form. This simplicity of form, with only the slightest indication of a physical body beneath the garments, is typical of Sui dynasty sculpture. Buddhist scenes, arranged in registers, cover both the front and back of the figure as if the sculptor had reproduced in stone some elaborately embroidered religious vestment. The rubbing of the front of the figure provides some indication of the complexity of the composition and the iconography. A comparison of specific iconographical details with similar examples, both in sculpture and painting, enables the figure to be identified as Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha.

Gilt bronze Buddhist trinity 14.21
Sui dynasty, A.D. 597
H. 32.1 cm. (12⅝ in.); W. 14.1 cm. (5-9/16 in.)

The three figures, Sakyamuni and two attendant Bodhisattvas, stand on a small dais decorated with scalloped edges and an incised inscription dated in correspondence with A.D. 597. The graceful lines of the scarves hanging from the Bodhisattvas' headdresses and robes, together with the curvilinear foliate forms of the supporting brackets, contrast with the more simply clad, austere figure of Sakyamuni. The tilted plane of the three mandorlas emphasizes the slightly forward bend of the heads and counterbalances corresponding curves in the chests and hips of the three figures. The measured, undulating grace that animates the Buddhist trinity is quite different from the more frenetic postures of Buddhist figures in the succeeding T'ang dynasty.

Limestone figure of eleven-headed Kuan-yin 09.98
T'ang dynasty, early 8th c.
H. 100.8 cm. (39-11/16 in.); W. 31.7 cm. (12½ in.)

This limestone statue of Kuan-yin, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, is connected with the Tantric sect of Buddhism. The ten additional small heads, symbolizing the ten stages on the way to enlightenment, are arranged on the Bodhisattva's headdress. Standing within the confines of a shallow niche, the sensual body of the Bodhisattva is clothed in diaphanous draperies and bedecked with meticulously carved jewelry. The sophisticated linear design of the floral halo and flying figures echoes the delicate tracery of the Bodhisattva's costume. The figure is very similar to another eleven-headed Kuan-yin in the collection, which was commissioned as part of an elaborate sculptural group for the Kuang-chai Temple in Ch'ang-an, Shensi province, some bearing dates ranging from 703 to 724. The close resemblance between the two Bodhisattvas in the Freer collection supports an early eighth-century date for both figures.

Limestone Bodhisattva 16.365
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 101.7 cm. (40 in.); W. 40.9 cm. (16⅛ in.)

The lithe, muscular bodies and dramatic movement which characterize Buddhist images made during the early years of the T'ang dynasty reflect the influence of the Gupta renaissance in India. This Bodhisattva image is clothed in diaphanous robes with strands of jewelry hanging from the neck. The curving lines of the jewelry are repeated in the sharp edges of the drapery folds which are arranged in regular patterns. Although the contrasting diagonal planes of the body and the drapery folds imply imminent movement, the figure is meant to be seen from the front or back rather than from either side.

Dry lacquer seated Buddha 44.46
T'ang dynasty, 7th-8th c.
H. 99.5 cm. (39-3/16 in.); W. 72.5 cm. (28-9/16 in.)

Although this figure depicts Sakyamuni, the individualized treatment of the face and the careful articulation of the body beneath the drapery folds suggest that the artist actually produced the portrait of a Buddhist monk. During the T'ang dynasty, many dry lacquer portraits of similar quality were produced in China. In the dry lacquer technique, layers of silk or hemp, soaked in lacquer, were spread over a clay core. When the lacquer had dried and hardened, the sculptor would remove the clay core, leaving only the light, durable exterior. Some traces of polychrome still remain on the surface of the statue.

Dry lacquer seated Bodhisattva 45.4
Yüan dynasty, 13th c.
H. 58.3 cm. (22-15/16 in.); W. 43.1 cm. (17 in.)

Esoteric Buddhism enjoyed imperial support during the Yüan dynasty. Under the influence of the celebrated lama 'Phags-pa, Kubilai Khan encouraged the religion. The style of this dry lacquer figure is not in the Chinese tradition of the period. Such details as the body, smooth and well filled out yet slim and vigorous; the almost heart-shaped face with finely cut nose, eyebrows and mouth; the sensitive and beautifully articulated hands; the profusion of bracelets, armlets and anklets; and the simple rope-like chignon—all have close parallels among thirteenth-century Nepalese Buddhist images. The marked Nepalese feeling in the modelling of the figure is a reflection of direct cultural exchange between the two countries. It is recorded that one of the Nepalese craftsmen who travelled to the Chinese capital was appointed controller of all artisans in the Imperial workshop.

Nymph of the Lo River 14.53
Southern Sung, 12th-13th c.
Handscroll; ink and color on silk
H. 24.0 cm. (9-7/16 in.); L. 310.0 cm. (122-1/16 in.)

The handscroll illustrates a poem written by Ts'ao Chih in A.D. 222, describing an encounter with a river goddess. Although traditionally attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, an Eastern Chin artist who was active about A.D. 400, the painting is a faithful Southern Sung copy of a fourth-century composition. The figures, trees, clouds and mountains were first defined with even-width outlines and then filled in with color washes. While it is obvious that the stylized landscape elements are still little more than stage props to set the scene for the activities of the figures, these tentative beginnings were of crucial importance in the development of Chinese landscape painting.

Kuan-yin of the Water Moon 30.36
Northern Sung, dated A.D. 968
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk
H. 107.1 cm. (42-3/16 in.); W. 59.1 cm. (23¼.)

The Bodhisattva Kuan-yin is seated cross-legged on a lotus throne, encircled by a flame-bordered nimbus. Attributes such as the flask and willow branch held in either hand, as well as the small seated figure of Amitabha in the Bodhisattva's headdress, clearly identify the deity. Smaller attendant Bodhisattvas flank the low altar placed before the lotus throne. In the lower register, four donor figures are depicted on either side of the central cartouche which contains an inscription dated in correspondence with 968. The bright mineral colors and hieratic composition are typical of Buddhist paintings of the period. The scroll is said to have come from the Buddhist complex at Tun-huang in Kansu province.

Ladies Playing Double Sixes 39.37 and 60.4
Style of Chou Fang, Northern Sung, 10th-11th c.
Handscroll; ink and color on silk
H. 30.7 cm. (12-1/16 in.); L. 64.4 cm. (25⅜ in.)

Chou Fang, who worked in the late eighth century, is noted for his paintings of plump, heavily coiffured palace ladies, based on the ample proportions of Yang Kuei-fei (died 756). In this Sung dynasty copy of a Chou Fang composition, two ladies are seated before a low table playing double-sixes, a game similar to backgammon. Two women stand to one side watching the game, while the figures of four servants carrying water and a basin frame either side of the composition. The psychological awareness of the figures is subtly revealed by their discreet gestures and glances.

Portraits of Wang Huan and Feng P'ing
48.10 and 48.11
Northern Sung, 11th c.
Album leaves, ink and light color on silk
H. 39.3 cm. (15½ in.); W. 31.7 cm. (12½ in.)

The tradition of painting portraits to commemorate a gathering of elderly gentlemen began at least as early as the T'ang dynasty. In 845 the poet Po Chü-i (772-846) entertained a group of nine friends, all of whom were sixty-five years old. During the Sung dynasty, in 1082, a similar gathering was held in Loyang by Wen Yen-po (1006-87) and Fu Pi (1004-83). On that occasion, the artisan Cheng Huan painted portraits of the thirteen participants. Unfortunately, none of the original paintings executed to commemorate those gatherings has survived.

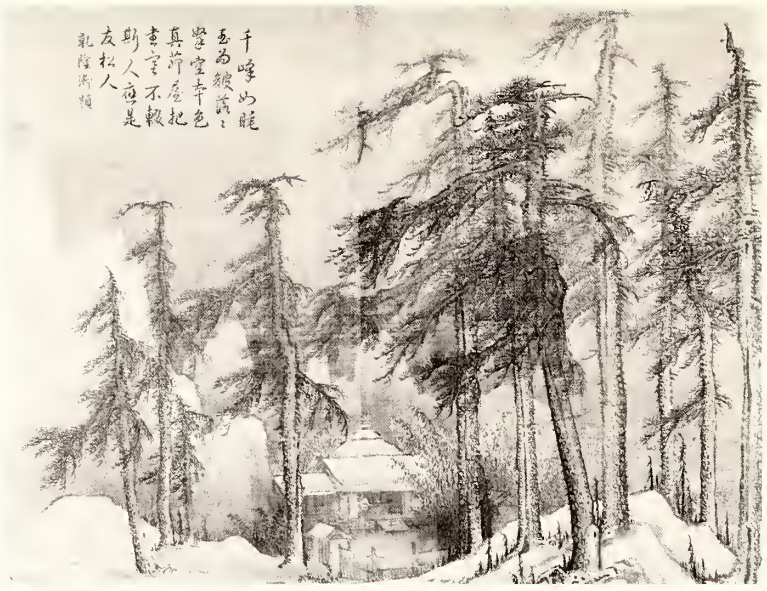
The portraits of Wang Huan (active ca. 1030) and Feng P'ing were originally part of an album entitled "Five Oldsters of Sui-yang," which commemorated a similar gathering. The gathering was arranged by the noted stateman Tu Yen (978-1057) in a pavilion that subsequently came to be called "Pavilion of Five Oldsters." Two other portraits from the same album are in the Yale University Art Gallery. The fifth leaf is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

On the two paintings in the Freer Gallery, the brief inscriptions identify Wang Huan and Feng P'ing, give their official titles and state that the men were 90 and 87 years old respectively. The portraits of Wang Huan and Feng P'ing, evidently painted during their lifetime, date from the eleventh century. Although they are formal and rather stiff, the portraits are distinguished by the sensitive drawing of the faces. The drapery, slightly shaded, hangs naturally to suggest the form and stance of the bodies beneath.

Clearing Autumn Skies Over Mountains and Valleys 16.538
Attributed to Kuo Hsi, Northern Sung, 11th c.
Handscroll; ink and light color on silk
H. 26.0 cm. (10¼ in.); L. 206.0 cm. (81⅛ in.)

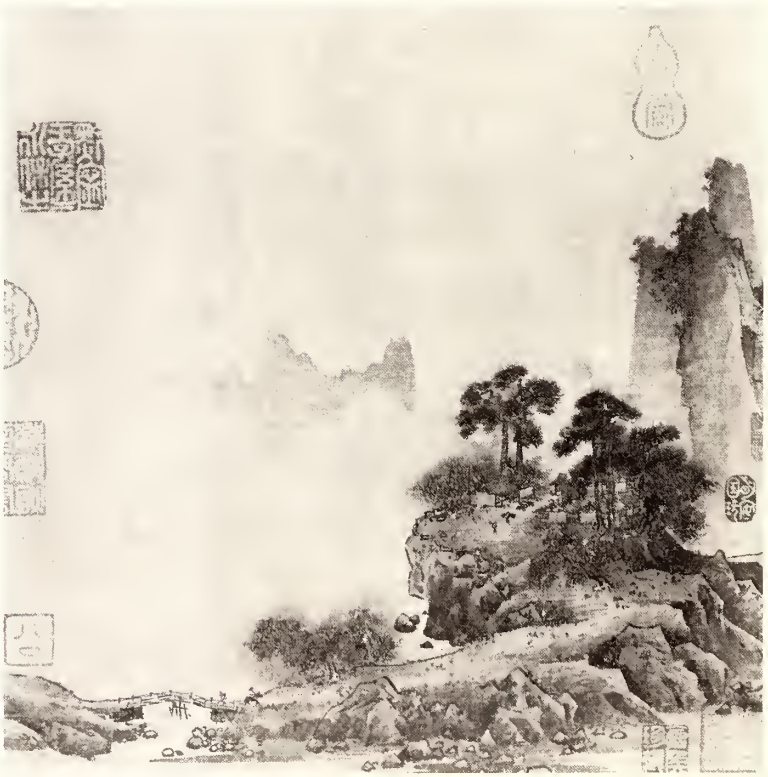
Although Kuo Hsi is mentioned in records as one of the greatest landscape artists of the late eleventh century, few genuine examples of his work are still extant. In this handscroll, the artist used moist ink washes to depict the towering, mist-shrouded mountain peaks. The foreground trees, buildings and figures are rendered with more meticulous detail, as if seen emerging from obscuring mists. By contrasting foreground and background elements, the artist succeeded in creating an illusion of space and distance.

Wind and Snow in the Fir-pines 61.34
By Li Shan (active late 12th c.)
Chin dynasty (1122-1234)
Handscroll; ink and light color on silk
H. 29.7 cm. (11-11/16 in.); L. 79.2 cm. (31-3/16 in.)
Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer



Li Shan, who worked during the Chin dynasty, is usually classified as a follower of the Kuo Hsi tradition. This handscroll is his only work recorded in Chinese texts and his only extant painting. The short handscroll depicts a deep winter scene in which a scholar is seated beside a brazier in a small thatched cottage nestled in a grove of tall fir-pines. Blunt, angular brushstrokes define the pine needles and rough bark of the foreground trees, behind which stretches a landscape of towering peaks.

Hostelry in the Mountains 35.10
By Yen Tz'u-yü, Southern Sung, 12th c.
Album leaf; ink and light color on silk
H. 25.3 cm. (10 in.); W. 25.8 cm. (10-3/16 in.)



Yen Tz'u-yü, whose signature is written in small characters on a rock in the lower right, entered the Imperial Painting Academy around 1163. While never so famous as his brother, Yen Tz'u-p'ing, he was awarded the Golden Girdle, an emblem of high rank. A mounted traveller accompanied by a servant has just crossed the bridge on his way to the village situated on a rocky knoll by the river. The album leaf employs the so-called one-corner composition, a favorite Southern Sung compositional device whereby attention is focussed on the clearly delineated foreground while the remainder of the composition is obscured by mist.

Lohan Laundering 02.224
By Lin T'ing-kuei, Southern Sung, dated 1178
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk
H. 111.8 cm. (44 in.); W. 53.1 cm. (20⅞ in.)

Lohan Laundering, which illustrates a scene in the daily life of the Buddhist disciples, is part of a complete set of 100 scrolls depicting the 500 Lohan. The action takes place within the shallow recesses of a rocky embankment. Broad brushstrokes of ink define the contorted pines, rocks and rushing water, while the Lohan and their servant are painted with precise outlines and opaque colors. An inscription in the lower right corner of the painting, written in gold and almost completely invisible, is dated in correspondence with 1178. (Another painting in the Freer collection from the same set, by Chou Ch'i-ch'ang, bears the same date.) Aside from the 100 paintings in this set, the remainder of which are in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and in Daitokuji, Kyoto, the two artists are unknown in the history of Chinese painting.

Chung K'uei Travelling 38.4
By Kung K'ai (1222-ca. 1304), Yüan dynasty
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 32.8 cm. (12-15/16 in.); L. 169.5 cm. (66¾ in.)

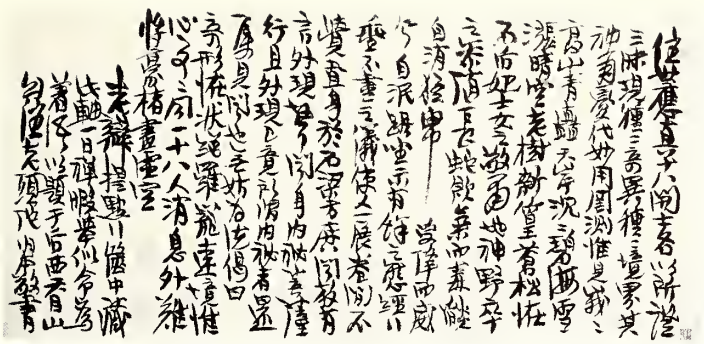
According to Kung K'ai's inscription, this handscroll depicts the legendary Chung K'uei and his sister on a demon hunt. The demon-queller and his sister ride in sedan-chairs, accompanied by a retinue of grotesque slave-demons, who carry Chung K'uei's sword, bundles of household goods and pots of wine. The artist used dry brushstrokes to define the figures, with occasional accents of black ink. Stylized insects decorate some of the textiles. Although demons or grotesque creatures appear frequently in Buddhist paintings, few early scrolls depicting demons alone are extant. The artist's inscription is followed by twenty-two colophons, ranging in date from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century.

Yang Kuei-fei Mounting a Horse 57.14
By Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235-after 1300), Yüan dynasty
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 29.5 cm. (11⅝ in.); L. 117.0 cm. (46 in.)

Ch'ien Hsüan was foremost among the group of artists who in the early years of the Yüan dynasty revived ancient styles and fused them with their own innovations to create a new and viable artistic vocabulary. In subject matter, this painting is an obvious reference to the past. The T'ang dynasty emperor Ming-huang (reigned 713-756), seated astride a horse, is watching his favorite concubine, Yang Kuei-fei, being helped onto her saddle by maidservants and attendants. Ch'ien Hsüan's use of precise outline and flat color, as well as his arrangement of the figures against a blank background, reflect his awareness of the achievements of T'ang dynasty artists. But a new sense of detached restraint which pervades the painting is typical of Ch'ien Hsüan's work and characteristic of Yüan dynasty archaism in general. There is an inscription by the artist at the end of the handscroll.

Sheep and Goat 31.4
By Chao Meng-fu (1254-1322), Yüan dynasty
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 25.2 cm. (9-15/16 in.); W. 48.4 cm. (19-1/16 in.)

A noted calligrapher, painter and statesman, Chao Meng-fu was one of the most important literati figures in the early years of the Yüan dynasty. Basing his composition on T'ang and Five Dynasties models, Chao Meng-fu silhouetted the fluffy sheep and the shaggy goat against the blank paper in tense counterpoise. As is often the case with Yüan literati paintings, the apparently simple subject matter carries political and social overtones. In his inscription at the left of the scroll, Chao states that he painted the animals at the request of Chung-hsin. The seals of Ming and Ch'ing dynasty collectors, as well as an encomium and seals of the Ch'ien-lung emperor (reigned 1736-95), are applied capriciously over most of the remaining paper.



Encomium 60.1
By Chung-feng Ming-pen (1263-1323), Yüan dynasty
Ink on paper
H. 30.4 cm. (12 in.); W. 63.2 cm. (24⅞ in.)

The Ch'an monk, Chung-feng Ming-pen, was a native of Chekiang province and spent most of his life at a monastery on famous T'ien-mu Shan. He is well-known both as a Buddhist monk and as a friend of such famous Yüan dynasty personalities as Chao Meng-fu and Kuan Tao-sheng. This encomium, written as a colophon to a painting by the Sung dynasty monk artist Fan-lung, is a fine example of his characteristically broad, carefree calligraphic style.

Bamboo in the Wind 53.85
By Wu Chen (1280-1354), Yüan dynasty, dated 1350
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
H. 109.0 cm. (42-15/16 in.); W. 32.6 cm. (12-13/16 in.)

Three columns of calligraphy in "running" script complement the single spray of windblown bamboo. The arc of the bamboo stem, which culminates in the taut curve at the extreme upper section, is emphasized by the repetition of blade-like strokes to indicate leaves. In his inscription dated in correspondence with 1350, Wu Chen states that he painted the bamboo after seeing a stone engraving of a similar painting by the Sung dynasty artist, Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101).

A Breath of Spring 31.1
By Tsou Fu-lei, Yüan dynasty, dated 1360
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 34.1 cm. (13-7/16 in.); L. 223.4 cm. (88 in.)

The handscroll, dated in correspondence with 1360, is one of the finest Chinese paintings of plum blossoms now extant. At the beginning of the painting, fresh shoots and delicate blossoms enframe a gnarled, lichen-studded plum branch. The short, staccato brushstrokes become increasingly longer throughout the composition, culminating in the long, sweeping stroke that dramatically completes the plum branch. Aside from the information contained in the inscriptions on this handscroll, apparently the only work by Tsou Fu-lei to survive, nothing is known of the Taoist artist.

(Detail)

Myriad Bamboo 38.18
By Sung K'o (1327-1387), Ming dynasty, dated 1369
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 24.9 cm. (9-13/16 in.); L. 98.1 cm. (35⅝ in.)

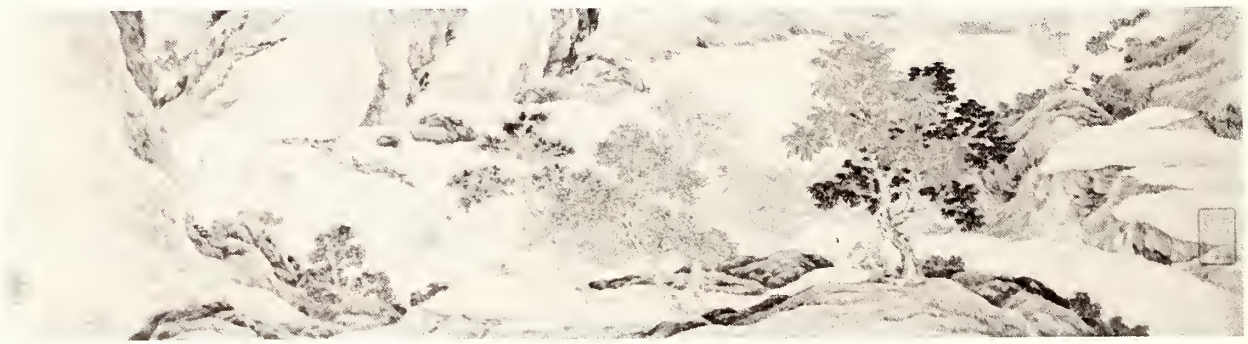
In China, bamboo symbolizes the gentleman who is able to maintain his own moral integrity regardless of adverse circumstances. Hence many literati artists specialized in painting ink bamboo. Sung K'o, who served as an official, was equally well-known as a poet and calligrapher. In this short handscroll, the lush bamboo is painted against a somewhat desiccated landscape rendered in long dry brushstrokes. Dark ink dabs occasionally accent the geometric shapes of the landscape, which are characteristic of Yüan dynasty painting. The artist's inscription is dated in correspondence with 1369, the second year of the Ming dynasty.

Fishermen on the River 30.80
By Tai Chin (1388-1462), Ming dynasty
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 46.0 cm. (18⅛ in.); L. 740.0 cm. (291⅜ in.)

Tai Chin served briefly at the court during the Hsüan-te period (1426-35) before returning to his native Chekiang province. While he was influenced by the achievements of Southern Sung artists, Tai Chin's ability to depict figures and landscapes with astonishingly swift brushstrokes established his reputation as founder of the Che school of painting. In this handscroll illustrating the activities of fishermen along a river, Tai Chin used bold, broad color washes reinforced with ink. The diagonal arrangement of the slender fishing boats throughout the composition increases the sense of animation suggested by the artist's daring brushwork.

Admonishing in Chains 11.235
Ming dynasty, 15th c.
Handscroll; ink and color on silk
H. 36.9 cm. (14½ in.); L. 207.9 cm. (81⅞ in.)

Narrative handscrolls depicting the exploits of meritorious ministers, loyal generals and paragons of filial piety, reflect the influence of Confucian tradition. This painting represents a well-known historical incident of the fourth century A.D., in which the minister, Ch'en Yüan-ta, chained himself to a tree and admonished Liu Ts'ung, the ruler of the State of Chao, for his extravagance. Only the courageous intervention of the Empress saved Ch'en from being carried away by guards to be executed. Liu Ts'ung is shown seated in the center of the composition, in slightly larger scale than the other figures. The figures are drawn with strong outlines and washes of color, and the landscape elements are modelled with texture strokes in ink. The artist succeeded in achieving dramatic unity in a narrative made up of three tableaux by such devices as groups of figures opening and closing the composition, a series of diagonals relating the protagonists, and gestures and glances uniting the figures.



Journey to Nanking 53.78
By T'ang Yin (1470-1523), Ming dynasty
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 24.3 cm. (9-9/16 in.); L. 89.3 cm. (35-3/16 in.)

T'ang Yin's position as a folk hero results from his reputation as a poet, painter and calligrapher as well as from the many stories found in Chinese literature describing his romantic exploits. A precocious student, his chances for an official career were ruined when he was inadvertently linked with an examination scandal. Nonetheless, T'ang Yin was befriended by the outstanding literati of the day and emerged as one of the great artists of the Ming dynasty, master of a variety of painting styles. In this short handscroll, the artist displays his ability to combine bold washes of dilute ink with delicately articulated details. The painting, a colophon in verse by the artist, as well as nine other colophons written by contemporary literati were a present for their mutual friend, Yang Chi-ching, a master of the zither, on the occasion of his trip to Nanking in 1505.

Taoist Sage Lao-tzu 72.1
By Ch'iu Ying (ca. 1510-1552), Ming dynasty
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 23.0 cm. (9 in.); L. 482.4 cm. (190 in.)

The handscroll comprises six figure compositions by Ch'iu Ying, each illustrating a traditional text transcribed by a well-known Ming calligrapher. The single figure here illustrated is probably a representation of the Taoist sage Lao-tzu, and the text it accompanies is the *Huang-t'ing-ching*, a Taoist text on immortality. Two seals are affixed on each of the six illustrations: *Shih-fu* on the lower left corner, and *Chien-ting* on the lower right corner. Better known as a figure painter of the more decorative school and a landscapist in the blue-and-green idiom, Ch'iu Ying selected for these illustrations the *pai-miao* style which is not usually associated with him but which is the most appropriate for the subject matter. The extreme simplicity with which the figures are rendered is clearly related to literati traditions. The handscroll is of vital importance in Ch'iu Ying's *oeuvre* because it provides insight into his close relationship with the artists working in Suchou in the early sixteenth century.

The Red Cliff 39.1
By Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559), Ming dynasty
Handscroll; ink and light color on paper
H. 30.5 cm. (12 in.); L. 141.5 cm. (55¾ in.)

The two Odes on the Red Cliff, written by the Sung dynasty poet-painter Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101), have been a favorite subject for literati artists throughout succeeding centuries. In this handscroll, the tiny boat and three travellers moving swiftly over the wide expanse of water provide the focal point of the composition. The poet's black hat establishes an accent that is echoed by a few spare ink strokes applied over the light washes of color in the craggy mountains. Wen Cheng-ming wrote the title at the beginning of the handscroll; following the painting he also added the text of the two Odes and appended the date 1552, when he was 83 years old.

Narcissus and *Bamboo* 54.8
By Hsü Wei (1520-93), Ming dynasty
Handscroll; ink on paper
H. 32.5 cm. (12-13/16 in.); L. 535.5 cm (210⅞ in.)

The swift, even frenetic, use of brush and ink is a striking characteristic of the twelve plant studies in this handscroll, two of which are here illustrated. A similar impetuousness is evident in the accompanying calligraphy. Hsü Wei admired the calligraphy of Mi Fei (1051-1107) and the influence of that Northern Sung master is apparent in the inscriptions on this scroll. Although Hsü Wei only began to paint floral studies in his later years, he quickly developed an individual and somewhat eccentric style.

Landscape with Figure 61.10h
By Ch'en Hung-shou (1599-1652), Ming dynasty
Album leaf; ink and color on paper
H. 33.5 cm. (13¼ in.); W. 27.3 cm. (10¾ in.)

Although Ch'en Hung-shou's earlier work is characterized by an outspoken eccentricity, his later paintings are more gentle, even subdued in mood. In this album leaf, the solitary seated scholar, clothed in billowing robes which hark back to T'ang dynasty conventions, is enframed by the barren trees and the rocks along the edge of a stream. The artist used a dry brush to articulate rocks, trees and water; with painstaking care he defined the tree branches and creepers. A mature, introspective mood pervades the small album leaf.

Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains 50.19
By Wang Hui (1632-1717), Ch'ing dynasty
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 38.4 cm. (15⅛ in.); W. 743.0 cm. (292½ in.)

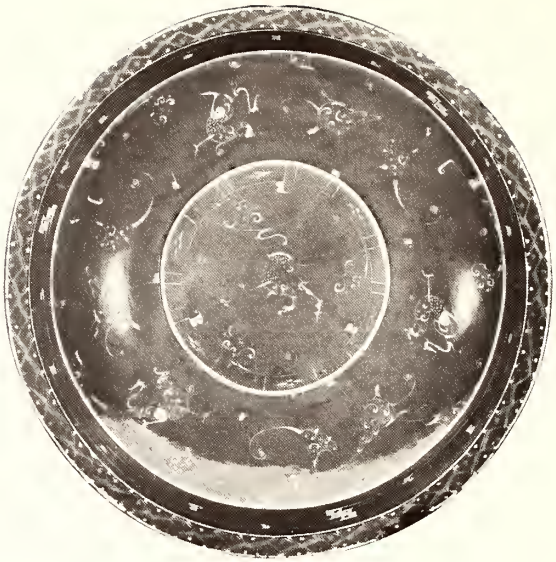
The Yüan dynasty painter Huang Kung-wang (1269-1354) was venerated by literati artists during the Ming and Ch'ing periods. Huang Kung-wang's most famous work, a long handscroll entitled *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*, was frequently copied by later artists, particularly seventeenth-century painters of the orthodox school. Wang Hui painted several handscrolls based on Huang Kung-wang's composition, and this one is especially important since it preserves the beginning section now lost from the original Yüan painting. Wang Hui's contribution was to imbue the robustness of the Yüan landscape with a new, undulating rhythm. The work can be dated 1672 on the basis of information in Wang Shih-min's (1592-1680) colophon at the end of the painting.

Peach Blossom Spring 57.4
By Tao-chi (1641-ca. 1717), Ch'ing dynasty
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 25.0 cm. (9⅞ in.); W. 157.8 cm. (62⅛ in.)

Tao-chi occupies a particularly important position among individualist painters of the Ch'ing dynasty. Reacting against popular academic painting styles of the period, Tao-chi sought a completely personal style that owed no debt to past traditions. This handscroll is an illustration of T'ao Yüan-ming's (365-427) poem, the *Peach Blossom Spring*. The fisherman, oar in hand, has just emerged from the cavern entrance to the lush valley where he is being met by three inhabitants of the fabled paradise. The powerful application of ink and color reveals the strength of the artist's conception. Dabs of color and short, vibrato ink strokes imbue the small landscape with an extraordinary sense of monumentality.

Lacquer bowl 53.8
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
H. 5.5 cm. (2-3/16 in.); D. 27.1 cm. (10-11/16 in.)

Excavations at Ch'ang-sha in Hunan province, which was part of the Warring State of Ch'u, have unearthed large numbers of lacquer objects dating from the late years of the Chou dynasty. These lacquer wares are characterized by careful workmanship and extremely sophisticated painted ornamentation. While most of the Ch'ang-sha lacquers are made over thin wood, this bowl has a fabric core. The tautly designed animal forms and geometric borders are skillfully applied in red and dull brown lacquer over a glossy brown lacquer ground.



Lacquer wine cup, *yü-shang* 47.24
Late Eastern Chou, 5th-3rd c. B.C.
H. 5.0 cm. (1-15/16 in.); L. 17.1 cm. (6¾ in.)

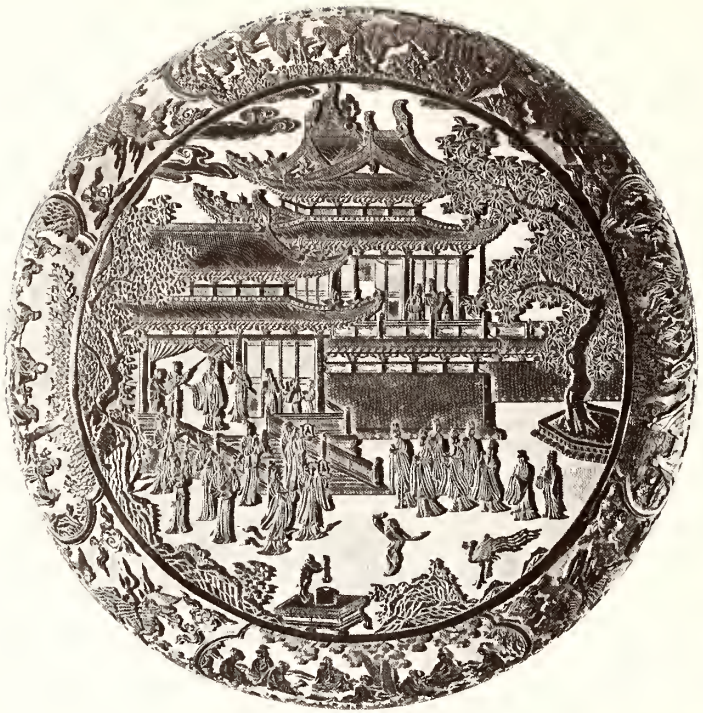
The *yü-shang*, consisting of a low cup of oval section and two longitudinal flange handles, was a common late Eastern Chou and Han shape found in lacquer and jade. This cup, said to have come from a tomb in Ch'ang-sha, Hunan province, is typical of the lacquer finds from the domain of the Warring State of Ch'u. The contrast of the geometricized birds in the band beneath the rim to the flowing treatment of the deer and quatrefoil design on the handles marks the transition between the tightly elaborate style of inlaid bronzes of late Eastern Chou and the loose and more naturalistic painting style of Han.

Lacquer dish 68.67
Yüan dynasty, first half of the 14th c.
H. 3.5 cm. (1⅜ in.); D. 22.0 cm. (8⅝ in.)

The shapes of Sung and Yüan undecorated lacquers parallel closely those of porcelains dating from the same period. Completely unornamented, these lacquers depend for their appeal on their elegant form and rich, sober color. This dish has a fluted cavetto and a flat rim with corresponding foliations. The shape, which simulates a fully opened lotus blossom, has an almost exact counterpart in a white porcelain dish of Yüan date. There are occasional lighter areas and some cracking on the deep chestnut-colored lacquer.

Lacquer covered box 65.25
Ming dynasty, early 15th c.
H. 3.8 cm. (1½ in.); D. 11.0 cm. (4-5/16 in.)

Some of the finest Chinese carved red lacquer was made during the final years of the Yüan dynasty and the beginning of the Ming. The body is built up of many layers of red lacquer applied successively to a wooden core, and the designs are carved through the layers to a yellowish-colored ground. The carving of this intractable material calls for exceptional dexterity, as exemplified by this round covered box which is ornamented with a design of *ch'i-lin* and peonies. A three-character inscription incised in the black lacquered base inside the footrim reads, "Made by Yang Mao," a master lacquerer said to have been active in the mid-fourteenth century, but the style of the decoration indicates an early fifteenth-century date for the box.



Lacquer covered box 68.76
Ming dynasty, late 15th c.
H. 17.8 cm. (7 in.); D. 32.0 cm. (12⅝ in.)

The cover of the circular box is delicately carved with a mythological scene depicting a group of figures assembled before the lunar palace of Ch'ang O. The three-legged toad climbing on the rocks in the lower left, as well as the hare pounding with mortar and pestle in the foreground, are traditional symbols of the moon. On the curving sides of the box are rounded panels enclosing sages while the spaces between the panels are filled with *ch'i-lin*, clouds and fungus. The artist achieves an unusually complex composition within a shallow depth by contrasting the modelled carving of the brownish-black lacquer with the red diaper patterns and the yellow ground. Inscribed on the right column of the left verandah is the artist's name, Wang Ming of P'ing-liang, which also appears on a lacquer dish in a private collection dated in correspondence with 1489.

Funerary urn 73.18
Earthenware with painted decoration
Neolithic period, ca. 2000 B.C.
H. 24.5 cm. (9⅝ in.); D. 21.2 cm. (8⅜ in.)

The painted pottery urn belongs to the Yang-shao neolithic culture of north China, with its nuclei in Kansu and Honan. Within this culture are several types of pottery, related temporally and geographically, but their precise chronological and stylistic relationships have not yet been worked out. The particular geometric designs on this urn, painted in black and dark reddish-brown on the buff earthenware, identifies it as of the Ma-ch'ang phase, which succeeded the Pan-shan type. Yang-shao pottery was made by the coil method, the wheel being then unknown, but the rim shows evidence of having been finished with some sort of rotary device. The significance of the strikingly bold designs has not yet been determined. During neolithic times such urns were placed in tombs.

Jar 39.42
Stoneware with carved decoration
Shang dynasty, middle Anyang period, late 13th-early 12th c. B.C.
H. 33.2 cm. (13-1/16 in.); D. 28.3 cm. (11⅛ in.)

The jar is of the type of ware usually referred to as Anyang white pottery. The Anyang provenance is firmly attested to by similar sherds excavated at Hsiao-t'un during the 1930's. Although called pottery, the ware actually has the hardness and porosity index of a light stoneware. The refined clay with a low iron content was thrown on the wheel. When half dry, the surface was burnished and the design carved with a knife, and the pieces were then fired to about 1,100 degrees centigrade. The ornamentation on this white ware relates it unmistakably to Shang bronze vessels of the Anyang period, and it is postulated that the ware was made for burial as less costly substitutes for bronze vessels. Contrary to the commonly held belief, this white ware is not the earliest white ware in China. A considerable quantity of white ware sherds was excavated in the late 1950's at a site in Shantung which appears to be transitional between neolithic and early Shang, and the reconstructed pieces have shapes closely resembling those of Lungshan black pottery.

Model of a tower 07.68
Earthenware with green lead glaze
Eastern Han, 2nd c. A.D.
H. 84.4 cm. (33¼ in.); D. 44.0 cm. (17 5/16 in.)

It is recorded in historical texts that during the Eastern Han, landlords and their families would seek refuge in fortified towers at times when peasant uprisings threatened. This two-storied tower set in a bowl-shaped moat, with sentries and archers standing guard, may be a simplified model of such a structure. During the Han dynasty, there was a proliferation of objects made expressly for burial. The models of people, domestic structures, household articles and farm animals recovered from tombs provide a vivid picture of everyday life. The pottery is usually covered with a green lead glaze which has developed iridescence in the course of burial.

Basin 52.26
Proto-Yüeh ware; stoneware with grayish green feldspathic glaze
Late Eastern Han-Western Chin, 3rd c.
H. 8.6 cm. (3⅜ in.); D. 35.8 cm. (14 in.)

The term "proto-Yüeh ware" designates several types of northern Chekiang stoneware with a green feldspathic glaze, ranging from the third to the sixth century, which are precursors of the classical Yüeh ware of the late T'ang through Northern Sung. The earliest group of this family is associated with the site of Chiu-yen, about thirty miles southeast of Hangchou, a site which was investigated in the 1930's. In shape and ornamentation, the proto-Yüeh ware at this site has many affinities with bronze vessels of the Eastern Han period, as exemplified in this basin. The exterior is ornamented with three bands of impressed decoration and four molded monster masks with ring handles. The flange rim and interior base of the basin bear incised designs of scallops. The paste is a gray stoneware, hard and impermeable, and the grayish green glaze covers the entire vessel. The basin was fired on spurs which left their marks on the base.

Earthenware jar with green lead glaze 30.32
Sui-early T'ang, late 6th-early 7th c.
H. 59.8 cm. (23-9/16 in.); D. 46.0 cm. (18⅛ in.)

The unusually large ovoid body has a tall flaring neck, rounded lip and flat base. Relief medallions of alternating lionhead masks and rosettes are applied to the shoulder of the jar. Eight eyelets are placed between the medallions directly beneath eight smaller bosses. Three lines lightly incised on the shoulder of the jar probably were used as a guide in affixing the medallions and eyelets. The entire jar is covered with a green lead glaze with large areas of silvery iridescence. Related examples suggest that the jar was intended to stand on a tall, splayed support.

Stoneware ewer with dark brown glaze 56.30
Eastern Chin (317-420)
H. 23.5 cm. (9¼ in.); W. 11.6 cm. (6½ in.)

This ewer belongs to a group of similar pieces of rather squat proportions, with a pseudo-spout modelled as a rooster head and the handle as a dragon head. Some of these were excavated from dated Eastern Chin tombs in the Hangchou-Nanking area. This is the earliest known Chinese brown ware. The two-layer glaze is minutely crackled and shows a tendency to flake off. The ware was a secondary product made at the Te-ch'ing kilns in northern Chekiang, kilns whose primary ware was proto-Yüeh celadon. The rather coarse gray stoneware body, the method of firing on spurs, and the predilection for small sculptural forms are characteristic of the wares of the area in the Eastern Chin period. The non-functional character of the spout indicates that these ewers were made for burial.

Bottle-shaped vase 73.1
Earthenware with three-color glazes
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 25.7 cm. (10⅛ in.); D. 11.5 cm. (4½ in.)

Influences from a number of different sources and materials are evident among T'ang ceramic vessels made for burial. In this elegant bottle-shaped vase, the reference to metal prototypes is obvious in the clear demarcation of neck, body and foot. T'ang metal vases of similar size and shape have recently been unearthed in China. The buff-colored paste is covered with a transparent glaze and further enhanced by freely applied amber, green and yellow glaze which streak down the vase in an irregular pattern. Some parts of the surface are minutely crazed and iridescent. There are three elongated spur marks on the flat base.

Woman on horseback 52.13
Earthenware with three-color glazes
T'ang dynasty, first half of the 8th c.
H. 37.6 cm. (14-13/16 in.); L. 43.1 cm. (16-15/16 in.)

The variety of burial figurines made during the T'ang dynasty provides an intimate glimpse of certain aspects of life of the period. Riding was a sport in which aristocratic T'ang ladies often participated. Clad in trousers and a short-sleeved jacket with wide lapels, the woman sits erect astride her sturdy horse. Only her face and full, upswept coiffure remain unglazed, with features painted directly onto the baked clay.

Stoneware wine jar with pale green glaze 61.27
T'ang-Northern Sung, 10th c.
H. 32.6 cm. (12⅞ in.); D. 15.2 cm. (6 in.)

The shape of this jar still retains a T'ang flavor with its demarcation of body, neck and foot. The alternating convex and concave surfaces of these and of the domed cover form an elegant, flowing silhouette. This jar belongs to a group of Chekiang celadons sometimes designated "gray ware of Yüeh type," whose distinguishing characteristic from Yüeh ware, apart from its very pale grayish green glaze, is its concern for shape over glaze and decoration. Jars of this type were intended for storing wine, as stated in the inscription of a similar vessel dated in correspondence with 1080.

Bowl 14.93
Porcelain with white feldspathic glaze
T'ang dynasty, 9th c.
H. 4.0 cm. (1-9/16 in.); D. 15.9 cm. (6¼ in.)

This white ware of North China has the distinction of being the earliest known Chinese porcelain, embodying the qualities of hardness, whiteness, resonance and, if the paste is thin enough, the ability to transmit light. The typical bowl of this ware is heavily potted, and has a thickened rim and a very low, broad foot. There is a white slip under the cold white glaze although the paste is so light in color that it hardly needs any dressing. The foot and base are unglazed. Sherds of this type of bowl have been excavated at Samarra, the site from 836 to 883 of the capital of the Abassid Caliphate on the River Tigris in modern Iraq. Despite controversies over the precise dates of the site, there is no reason to invalidate the ninth-century date these sherds furnish for the white ware. Small quantities of similar sherds have been found at several localities in northern Honan and in Hopei, including the primary kiln-site of Ting ware. This indicates that the ware had a fairly wide distribution and it seems premature to use the term Hsing ware unless a primary site is located in the area of the ancient Hsing Chou in Hopei province.

Vase 31.18
Tz'u-chou ware; stoneware with transparent glaze
Northern Sung, 11th c.
H. 39.7 cm. (15⅝ in.); D. 20.6 cm. (8⅛ in.)

Tz'u-chou ware, named after the district of Tz'u-chou, Hopei province, is a generic term for a variety of porcelaneous wares produced at a number of localities in southern Hopei and northern Honan in the Northern Sung period and later. These wares are distinguished by their inventive techniques of decoration which, combined with their robust shapes and bold designs, set them apart from their more refined contemporary wares, the so-called classical wares of Sung. The particular method of decoration on this vase entails dressing the grayish clay with a cream-colored slip and carving the design of swirling blossoms and foliage through the slip to expose the contrasting gray color of the paste. After the details have been incised, the vase is then covered with a thin transparent glaze and fired. Sherds with this type of decoration have been found at a kiln-site at Ch'ü-ho in Teng-feng Hsien, Honan province.

Covered box 44.12
Yüeh ware; stoneware with grayish green glaze
Northern Sung, second half of the 10th c.
H. 5.2 cm. (2-1/16 in.); D. 13.7 cm. (5-7/16 in.)

Yüeh ware takes its name after the old principality of Yüeh at the mouth of the Yangtze River in northern Chekiang province. Some of the kilns in this area have a history stretching back to the late Eastern Chou. The term Yüeh ware refers to the celadons produced in the ninth and tenth centuries in a complex of kilns, the most famous of which are the clusters around the Shang-lin Lake in Yü-yao Hsien. The Yüeh potters commanded a wide repertoire of floral, bird and dragon motives which are incised or carved onto the gray stoneware paste. The cover of this box is ornamented with an all-over design of three peonies carved in relief. Characteristic of Yüeh ware are the splayed foot and the six elongated spur marks on the glazed base.

Jar 45.10
Tz'u-chou ware; stoneware with dark brown glaze
Northern Sung, 11th c.
H. 28.6 cm. (11¼ in.); D. 27.6 cm. (10⅞ in.)

The jar has a wide mouth and two strap handles. A thin, reddish brown glaze covers the entire jar except the foot-rim, revealing a light buff-colored stoneware body. A second glaze, which is thick, lustrous and of a rich dark brown color, covers the exterior to just below the ribbings, ending in a welt. The effective color contrast on the jar results from the glaze being much thinner, therefore much lighter, over the closely spaced ribbings made of slip which had been applied directly onto the paste under both glazes. Typical of Tz'u-chou ware are the powerful potting, the ingenious design, and the impression of spontaneity from the slight irregularity of the ribbings, which belies the carefully planned and executed decoration. Sherds of this particular type of Tz'u-chou ware have been found at several kiln-sites in northern Honan and southern Hopei. Discovery of similar sherds at the town of Ch'ing-ho, Hopei, which was submerged by flood in A.D. 1108, supports an eleventh-century date for the type.

Vase 17.192
Tz'u-chou ware; stoneware with black glaze
Northern Sung, 11th-early 12th c.
H. 42.9 cm. (16⅞ in.); D. 34.6 cm. (13⅜ in.)

The large, ovoid vase has a sloping shoulder and a small flanged neck. The buff stoneware is covered with a glossy black glaze and a freely painted design of blossoms in rust brown ornament the upper portion of the vase. The materials, the robust shape and the spontaneously executed decoration place the jar firmly in the large Tz'u-chou family. Essentially a folk ware, Tz'u-chou ware differs markedly from the "classical" wares of the Sung dynasty. Perhaps because the potters did not depend on imperial patronage, they were able to give full rein to their inventiveness. To them can be traced the beginning of the use of painted decoration which was to become so important in later Chinese ceramics.

Bowl 68.65
Northern Celadon; stoneware with olive green glaze
Northern Sung, 11th c.
H. 7.3 cm. (2⅞ in.); D. 18.7 cm. (7⅜ in.)

The bowl has slightly curved sides, wide mouth and a small foot. A lotus design is carved on the interior and the bowl is covered with an olive green glaze which is finely crackled. The buff stoneware paste is visible at the foot, whose perfunctory finish is typical of the ware. The Chinese term for Northern Celadon is Yao ware, after the district of Yao Chou in Shensi province, where kiln-sites have been located at the modern T'ung-ch'uan. A stylistic sequence established on the basis of sherds collected at the kiln-sites enables the Freer bowl to be dated to the middle of the Northern Sung period.

Bowl 63.16
Ting ware; porcelain with ivory white glaze
Northern Sung, 11th-early 12th c.
H. 4.8 cm. (1⅞ in.); D. 21.0 cm. (8¼ in.)

Ting ware, named after the then district of Ting Chou in Hopei, is one of the classical wares of the Sung dynasty. Extensive kiln-sites have been located at Chien-tz'u Ts'un and Yen-shan Ts'un in Ch'ü-yang Hsien in that province, indicating that the ware was produced on a large scale. Despite the quantity, the ware was of uniformly high quality during its heyday in the Northern Sung, and pieces were supplied to the court. A descendant of late T'ang white ware of North China, Ting ware has the same white porcelain paste but differs from it in being thinly potted and in having a very lustrous white glaze with a distinct ivory-colored tinge. Bowls and dishes were fired upside-down, and the unglazed mouthrim was subsequently bound with metal. On this bowl, a design of ducks, waves and aquatic plants is freely incised under the glaze.

Vase 37.18
Lung-ch'üan celadon; stoneware with green glaze
Southern Sung, 12th c.
H. 25.9 cm. (10-3/16 in.); D. 11.3 cm. (4-7/16 in.)

The term Lung-ch'üan ware is a type name rather than a precise identification of the products of a particular kiln. Large quantities of the celadon were exported as early as the Sung dynasty, while even greater numbers were shipped to Western Asia, Japan and Southeast Asia during the Yüan and Ming dynasties. This *kinuta*, or mallet-shaped vase, with a pair of fish handles and wide everted lip, is covered with a lustrous uncrackled glaze. The close-textured, unctuous surface, so reminiscent of jade, makes it one of the finest of the Sung dynasty celadon glazes. Vases of this type have been recovered in a Southern Sung context at the kiln-site at Ta-yao, one of the two most important sites in the complex of more than two hundred located in Lung-ch'üan Hsien, southern Chekiang province.

Vase 11.338
Kuan ware; stoneware with bluish gray glaze
Southern Sung, 12th c.
H. 23.2 cm. (9⅛ in.); D. 14.1 cm. (5-9/16 in.)

This vase has a hard, thin and very dark brown paste and a thick, lustrous, and opaque bluish gray glaze with wide crackles. Its outstanding quality indicates that it probably belongs to that relatively small group of Kuan ("official") ware made for imperial use at the kiln at Phoenix Hill in the vicinity of the palace at Hangchou. The kiln was established soon after the beginning of the Southern Sung in 1127 and was in operation for only a few decades; its site has not yet been located. The term Kuan ware is extended to cover a variety of related wares made subsequently in the Hangchou area, generally of lesser quality, having a lighter colored paste, greenish or yellowish glazes which are less opaque and more prone to smaller and sometimes even secondary crackles.

Pear-shaped vase 49.12
Chün ware; stoneware with blue glaze
Yüan dynasty (1279-1368)
H. 34.4 cm. (13-9/16 in.); D. 14.3 cm. (5⅝ in.)

Chün ware, named after the district of Chün Chou in Honan province, was produced at a number of different localities in northern Honan and southern Hopei from the Sung dynasty through Yüan into Ming. Its most distinctive feature is the thick opaque blue glaze, often flushed with crimson or purple, with spectacular results. The lavender blue glaze of this vase is suffused with grayish green. While Sung dynasty Chün pieces are generally fully glazed on the exterior, those of Yüan date tend to have their lower portion unglazed. The Yüan date of this vase is also supported by its attenuated silhouette which resembles that of a number of other Yüan pieces in other wares.

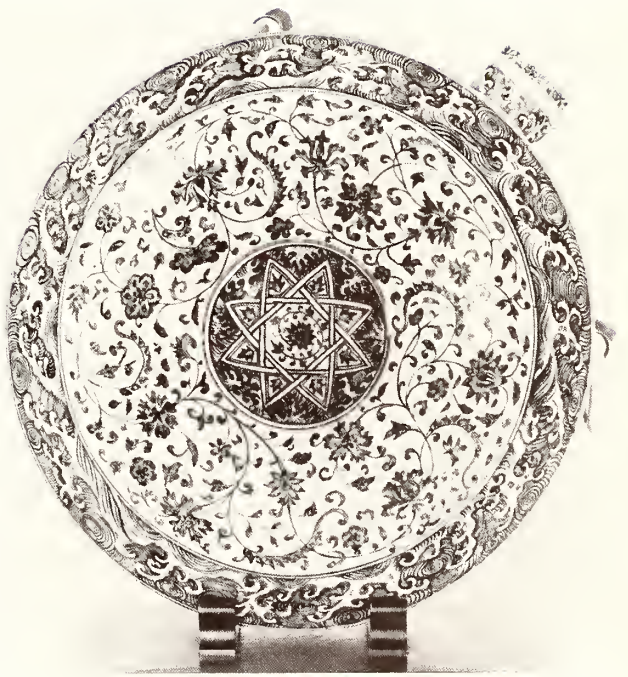
Tea bowl 09.369
Chien ware; stoneware with dark brown glaze
Sung dynasty (960-1279)
H. 8.8 cm. (3½ in.); D. 19.2 cm. (7-9/16 in.)

The Chien ware kilns at Chien-ning, Fukien province, specialized in making tea bowls on a large scale during the Sung dynasty. These were highly prized by the Japanese for use in tea ceremonies; consequently the ware is better known under its Japanese name, Temmoku. The paste of Chien ware is a coarse dark brown stoneware. The glaze, which is extremely viscous and brown-black in color, usually stops short of the foot in a thick welt and forms globules. The fascination of the ware lies in its silvery, deep bluish or brown streaks or spots, caused by excesses of the ferric oxide in the glaze being deposited on the surface in the course of the oxidizing firing. To these patterns Chinese connoisseurs have given such fanciful names as "hare's fur" and "partridge mottles." This tea bowl, otherwise typical of Chien ware, is somewhat unusual for its large size and its flaring silhouette.

Dish 71.3
Porcelain with underglaze blue decoration
Yüan dynasty, 14th c.
H. 8.0 cm. (3⅛ in.); D. 45.5 cm. (17⅞ in.)

The tradition of painting underglaze decoration on Chinese ceramics can be traced to Sung dynasty folk wares produced in kilns located at Tz'u-chou in Hopei and at Chi-chou, which adjoins Ching-te Chen in Kiang-si. During the early 14th century, cobalt blue pigment imported from the West was used by artisans at the Ching-te Chen kilns to produce a new ware that was to influence ceramic traditions throughout the world. The subjects that appear on the earliest examples of Chinese blue-and-white are frequently derived from Taoist mythology and from popular Yüan dynasty plays. This dish possesses all of the characteristics of that early phase of blue-and-white porcelain: heavy potting, exuberant painted decoration, dark blue pigment verging on navy, and an unglazed base which has burnt orange in the firing.

Flask 58.2
Porcelain with underglaze blue decoration
Early Ming, ca. 1400-30
H. 47.5 cm. (18¾ in.); D. 41.8 cm. (16-7/16 in.)



In the early fifteenth century, Chinese potters at Ching-te Chen imitated several Islamic metalwork shapes in blue-and-white porcelain. This large circular blue-and-white flask is derived from metal canteens made in Syria in the mid-thirteenth century. In size, shape and proportion, the porcelain flask follows closely its metal prototype, but the height of the spout is reduced and instead of two strap handles on either side of the spout, it has two large free-moving ring handles attached to the shoulders by annular lugs. Dominating the decoration is the geometric eight-pointed star in the domed center, a motif that is Near Eastern in derivation. With that exception, the decoration of the flask is essentially Chinese in character. The style of the wave band and the floral scroll serves to date the flask to the first third of the fifteenth century.

Bowl 52.4
Porcelain with underglaze blue decoration
Ming dynasty, second half of the 15th c.
H. 9.5 cm. (3¾ in.); D. 20.4 cm. (8 in.)

The decoration inside the center of the bowl consists of pine, bamboo and plum—"the three friends of winter"—together with a formalized garden rock enclosed within double circles. The figures in the landscape on the outside of the bowl are separated by a pine, bamboo and tall stone. The combination of the unblemished white porcelain body, the delicate pale color of the blue, the sensitive brushwork of the drawing, and the smooth and lustrous transparent glaze makes this bowl an extraordinarily fine example dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, probably from the reign of Ch'eng-hua (1465-87). To many connoisseurs, blue-and-white porcelain of this style and quality represents the essence of Chinese taste and its peak of perfection.

Stem-cup 51.16
Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels
Ming dynasty, Ch'eng-hua period (1465-87)
H. 8.0 cm. (3⅛ in.); D. 6.3 cm. (2½ in.)

The Chinese term for the technique of decoration on this stem-cup is *tou-ts'ai*, "contrasting colors," which refers to the use of blue for the outlines under the glaze and of enamel washes in red, green and yellow for the flowers over the glaze. The technique was an innovation of the reign of Ch'eng-hua. This exquisite cup exemplifies the ultimate in refined taste in porcelain during this period. A six-character Ch'eng-hua mark is written in underglaze blue in a horizontal line on the hollow foot.

Jar 52.21
Porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration
Ming dynasty, Cheng-te period (1506-21)
H. 11.3 cm. (4-7/16 in.); D. 14.6 cm. (5¾ in.)

The technique of using incised lines to separate different colored glazes occurred as early as the T'ang dynasty, and was revived in the middle of the Ming. But whereas the T'ang pieces underwent only one firing since the low temperature of about 900 degrees centigrade was suitable for both the pottery and the glaze material, the Ming pieces had to undergo two firings since the porcelain body and the glaze material required two different firing temperatures. The method devised was to incise the lines on the leather-hard clay, then fire the piece (with a transparent feldspathic glaze on the interior and base if required, as on this vase) to about 1250 degrees C. to vitrify it and render it impermeable, then apply the glaze colors to the "biscuited" body, and finally to fire the piece a second time to about 900 degrees in order to make the colors adhere to the body. During the Cheng-te period, the technique was used extensively on vases and dishes with dragon and cloud decoration. The lively design and the color scheme of contrasting vivid green and warm yellow mark a change from the ultra refinement of the Ch'eng-hua period. A four-character Cheng-te mark is on the base.

Vase 47.16
Porcelain with lavender blue crackled glaze
Ch'ing dynasty, K'ang-hsi period (1662-1722)
H. 41.2 cm. (16-3/16 in.); D. 21.2 cm. (8-5/16 in.)

This vase, with globular body and tall, slender neck, is heavily potted and covered with a fine deep lavender blue glaze with a close, even crackle. Monochrome porcelain made during the reign of K'ang-hsi is distinguished by a technical perfection matched by fine shape, beauty of color and texture of glaze, qualities which are admirably demonstrated by this vase.

Pair of small bottles 45.39 and 45.40
Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration
Ch'ing dynasty, Yung-cheng period (1723-35)
H. 10.4 cm. (4⅛ in.); D. 5.8 cm. (2-5/16 in.)

The bottles have a six-lobed body, a slender neck and a low foot. Decorated in the *tou-ts'ai* technique with the outlines of the designs in underglaze blue and washes of enamel colors over the glaze, the bottles have retained the characteristics of small size, refined decoration and meticulous finish associated with *tou-ts'ai* pieces of the Ch'eng-hua period. A six-character reign mark of the Yung-cheng period, enclosed within a double circle, appears on the base of the bottles.

Garlic-headed vase 54.127
Ku-yüeh Hsüan; porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration
Ch'ing dynasty, early Ch'ien-lung period, 1736-ca. 1754
H. 17.2 cm. (6¾ in.); D. 9.5 cm. (3¾ in.)

Ku-yüeh Hsüan is a term for an exceptionally fine type of polychrome enamelled glass ware produced in the eighteenth century, and the term is extended to cover porcelain objects decorated in the same style. This type of porcelain is distinguished by very delicate painting in a wide range of enamel colors of predominently pastel shades. This small vase is ornamented with a seated female figure and two children amusing themselves in a garden. An awareness of Western painting techniques is apparent in the modelling of the faces and hands, reflecting the presence and activity of such Jesuit painters as Castiglione at the court. An illusion of a real painting rather than a porcelain vase is created by the intrinsic pictorial quality of the decoration, the poetic inscription and the accompanying seals. This over-refinement to the point of preciosity signals the decline of the long Chinese ceramic tradition. Ku-yüeh Hsüan porcelain reached its peak of perfection between ca. 1727 and 1754; its production is said to have ceased after 1754. A four-character Ch'ien-lung mark is written with gray enamel on the base.

JAPANESE CHRONOLOGY

JŌMON	? -c. 300 B.C.
YAYOI	c. 300 B.C.-c. 300 A.D.
KOFUN (Tumulus)	c. 300-552
ASUKA PERIOD (Suiko)	538-645
NARA PERIOD	645-794
Early Nara Period (Hakuho)	645-710
Late Nara Period (Tempyo)	710-794
HEIAN PERIOD	794-1185
Early Heian Period (Jogan)	794-897
Late Heian Period (Fujiwara)	897-1185
KAMAKURA PERIOD	1185-1334
NAMBOKU-CHŌ	1334-1392
MUROMACHI PERIOD (Ashikaga)	1334-1573
MOMOYAMA PERIOD	1573-1615
EDO PERIOD (Tokugawa)	1615-1868
Early Edo Period	1615-1716
Late Edo Period	1716-1868
MODERN PERIOD	1868-present
Meiji Period	1868-1912
Taishō Period	1912-1926
Shōwa Period	1926-present

JAPANESE ART

Situated off the coast of the Asian mainland in a temperate climate, the islands of Japan have enjoyed the advantages of a relatively favorable geographic position from the earliest times. The fertility of the islands permitted economic independence; their proximity to continental Asia allowed selected ideas and techniques from Korea and China to stimulate Japanese culture, while surrounding waters protected the Japanese people from being totally absorbed into the cultural horizons of neighboring Asian countries. China, that great civilization to the west, influenced and inspired the Japanese a number of times and in varying degrees, yet the relationship was always a detached one. Japanese artisans consistently transformed the intrusive cultural elements into a distinctive indigenous style.

Japan's artistic heritage began during the Jōmon period, a period of undetermined origins which ended around the third century B.C. and is named after its cord-marked pottery. The free-form vessels and abstract fertility figurines mark the beginnings of Japan's distinguished sculptural tradition that later flourished under Buddhist patronage. Buddhism had been a dominant religious force in Asia for a thousand years before it was accorded imperial sponsorship in sixth-century Japan. Initially, during the Asuka period (538-645), Buddhist images had an abstract, supermundane appearance; but during the succeeding Hakuhō (645-710) and Nara (710-794) periods, influences from T'ang dynasty China directed the sculptors towards greater realism.

In 794 the capital was moved from Nara to Heian, present day Kyoto, which remained the cultural center for most of Japan's history. The Heian era (794-1185) was one of the most refined periods of Japanese art. Buddhist esoteric sects prospered. Shingon, one of the most influential sects, emphasized the unification of Buddhist doctrines. Its mandaras are diagrams of the universe that define the relationships of divinities to the Cosmic Buddha. Patrons of Buddhism supported sculptors and painters whose diversity of styles ranged from semi-realistic to heavy bulky conceptions, and culminated in images of elegant and delicate formal beauty. Within the courtly sphere the Heian era was the "classical" period, and the cultivation of exquisite taste was regarded as the highest achievement. Lady Murasaki wrote the *Tale of Genji*, usually recognized as the world's first novel; and palace ladies developed *kana*, a native script most often used for poetry, that began to complement the Chinese characters and style of writing which had been introduced with Buddhism.

The following Kamakura period (1185-1334) was the last great age when Buddhist arts flourished. New Buddhist sects were founded by evangelical priests who travelled among the common people, vividly describing Paradise and Hell, and promising salvation to the true believer. Vigor and liveliness in sculpture and painting reflect this new direction towards the common and military tastes. Mandaras such as the tripartite Kumano example manifest the syncretic doctrines that united Buddhism with indigenous, popular Shinto beliefs which were centered on the forces of nature. Contacts with Southern Sung China nurtured Japan's acceptance of Zen Buddhism and

with it, the associated Chinese styles of art. The Takuma school merged the bold Chinese techniques of brush and color with native aesthetics. Narrative handscrolls, depicting Japanese themes and people of all classes, attest to the quality of the indigenous or *Yamato-e* manner of painting, a tradition which, from earliest times, had been characterized by strong colors, narration, action, and a predilection to treat forms as abstract patterns.

In the thirteenth century, Japan twice did what no other nation had done previously. With the aid of a typhoon, *kamikaze*, and steadfast resistance, they successfully repulsed threatened invasions by the Mongols. The price was political disunity during the Namboku-chō (1334-92). Although the arts continued, it was not until the Ashikaga shoguns unified the nation near the end of that period that the arts again flourished. By the fifteenth century, extensive commercial and cultural contacts with China were once again re-established. Zen Buddhism reached its peak of influence over the religious and secular aesthetics in all the arts, from architecture and gardening to pottery, poetry and painting.

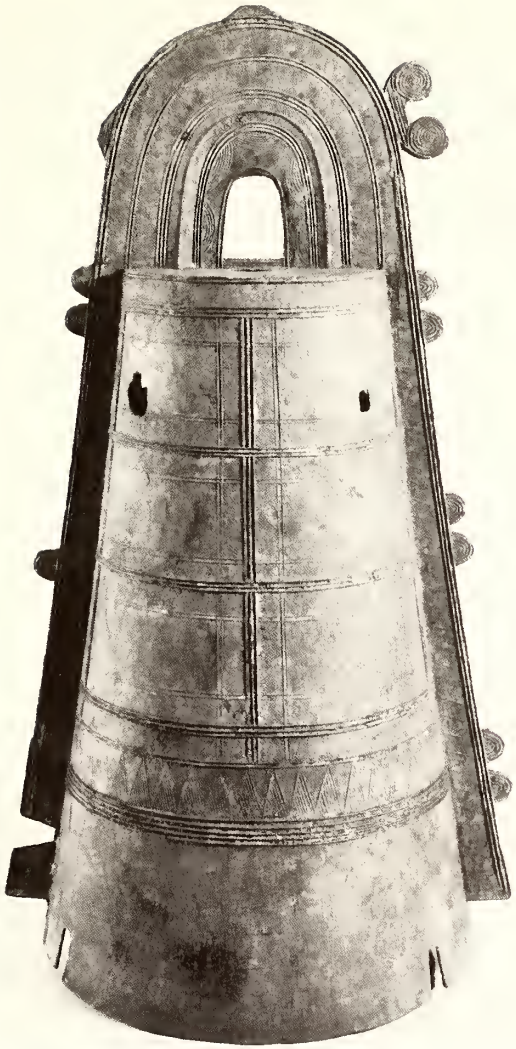
No longer was *suiboku-ga* (ink painting) solely the art of Buddhist monks as it had been during the Namboku-chō. The Kanō school, founded by Kanō Masanobu (1434-1530) and patronized by the government, was responsible for the introduction of *suiboku-ga* into the secular world. The acknowledged master of ink painting, Sesshū Tōyō (1420-1506), traveled to China to study first hand in the country of its origins, and returned to his homeland where, he ultimately thought that painting was as advanced. Coincident with an expansion of styles in the artists' repertoire, various schools began to emerge with leaders such as Hasegawa Tōhaku (1538-1610), Kaihō Yūshō (1533-1615), and Unkoku Tōgan (1547-1618). The work of the Tosa school, founded by Tosa Mitsunobu (1469-1523), contrasts with the Chinese style monochrome painting, for those artists continued to use the brilliant colors and bold compositional designs characteristic of their own *Yamato-e* tradition.

During the sixteenth century there was perhaps no greater arbiter of taste than Sen no Rikyu (1521-91). Born into a merchant family, he served as a tea master to the first two rulers of the Momoyama period (1573-1615), and developed a cult favoring that which is rustic and elaborately understated. Crafts such as pottery and lacquer were elevated to the status of a personalized art, an approach virtually unknown in China or Korea. It was not long before the prized wares imported from China lost their special status in favor of the productions of local Japanese kilns which thereupon began to be increasingly patronized. Regard for the exotic, however, still persisted, and commerce with foreign countries prospered. Portuguese traders, Jesuit priests, and other foreigners as well as the wealth they brought to the Japanese merchants can be seen in many of the genre paintings of the day. Gold, whether used on screens or lacquer objects reveals the love for sumptuousness that somehow coexisted with the restrained aesthetic called *wabi*, "lonely seclusion."

Some of the most distinctive and well known arts of Japan were produced during the Edo period (1615-1868). The ceramic traditions of the Momoyama tea wares con-

tinued to prosper; porcelain began to be made, overglaze enamel decoration began to be applied, and the bold, colored, designs increased in refinement throughout the period. Artists of the Rimpa school brought to a crescendo the native, ancient values of Japanese art. Their strong, arresting designs in all mediums epitomize the abstract developments of Japanese art. Concurrent revival of "classical" traditions, with this genre also found expression in the paintings and prints of the "floating world," *ukiyo-e*. Artists such as Hiroshige (1797-1858), Hokusai (1760-1849), and Utamaro (1754-1806), have been as influential and esteemed in the West for almost as long as in their native land. Occidental art reciprocally influenced Japanese artists with new techniques and visions. The enduring Chinese tradition of literati art found adherents in artists of the Nanga school such as Ikeno Taiga (1723-76) and Yosa Buson (1716-84), who adopted Chinese theories and ideals, yet painted in a style and tradition that was ultimately all their own.

The regional variations throughout the history of Japanese art have enriched its numerous stylistic traditions. Whether viewing the broad and extensive cultural heritage of Japan according to time or medium, the connoisseur and student will find rewards unequalled in most countries.



Dōtaku 68.73
Yayoi period
H. 95.7 cm. (37⅝ in.), W. 50.8 cm. (20 in.)

Bronze casting techniques were introduced into Japan from the continent during the Yayoi period. Among the objects cast by Japanese artisans are *dōtaku*. In spite of their bell-like shapes the *dōtaku* were not used as musical instruments, but perhaps served in fertility or hunting rituals. The surface of this bell is ornamented with fine, raised-line relief; a series of curved shapes decorate the outer edge of the axial flange.

Bronze mirror 68.71
Tumulus period, 3rd to 6th c.
D. 14.6 cm. (5¾ in.)

This mirror dating from the Tumulus period is notable for its fine state of preservation and unusual design. Spaced evenly around the circular beveled edge are six round, hollow protuberances which have narrow perforations. Each of the protuberances contains a small metal pellet which jingles when the mirror is handled. The decoration of the mirror, from its outer edge, is enclosed within three bands. The first band of decoration resembles sun rays. The second band consists of a conventional herring-bone design symbolic of water. Cast into the third band are seven highly stylized aquatic forms. A slight residue of reddish pigment, perhaps cinnabar, remains in the decorative area of the mirror.

Bronze water pitcher 65.26
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 27.5 cm. (10⅞ in.); D. 13.5 cm. (5-5/16 in.)

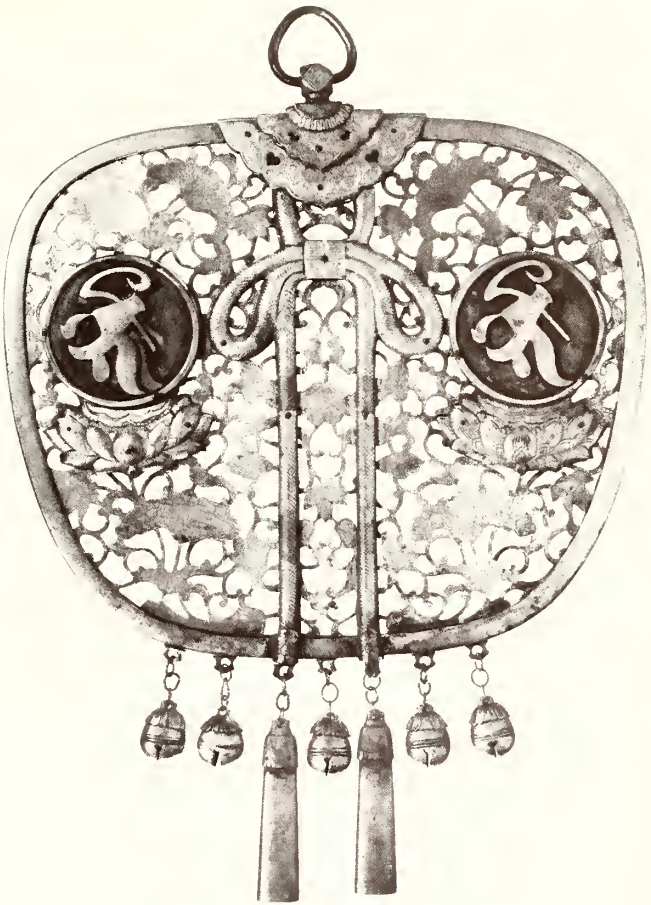
A *suibyō*, or water pitcher, is a ceremonial vessel placed before Buddha images to hold the water with which monks clean their hands. This unusually sophisticated example has a taut silhouette accented at regular intervals by slight indentations or projecting ridges. A fully modeled lion serves as the handle for the lid; stylized foliate forms ornament the spout and handle. The spout originally was somewhat longer.

Iron kettle 67.20
Kamakura period, ca. 1300
H. 23.5 cm. (9¼ in.); D. 33.0 cm. (13 in.)

Ashiya, in the Fukuoka area of Kyūshū, has been famous for the manufacture of fine iron kettles since the thirteenth century. Ashiya-type iron kettles are smooth surfaced and often have a natural textured pattern. This kettle has a pebbly texture with a characteristic luster referred to as "catfish skin." The relief design on the main body of the kettle shows a sandy shore, sinuous pine trees, waves and shells. This theme was often used by *Yamato-e* painters. The kettle is unusually large and complete and probably was used at special tea ceremonies.

Keman 74.13
Kamakura period, 1185-1333
Gilded and silvered copper
H. 27.3 cm. (10¾ in.); W. 31.5 cm. (12-7/16 in.)

Pendant metal discs, known as *keman*, are believed to have originated in floral wreaths brought as Buddhist votive offerings. In this example, the cord tied in a bow probably is based on that which originally bound garlands of real flowers. On either side of the cord are circular medallions supported upon lotus flowers. Sanskrit letters occur within the silvered medallions on both faces of the *keman*. Hanging from the bottom of the disc are five circular bells and two jingles. The single sheet of metal which separates the front and back of the *keman* is cut into a design of lotus leaves, buds and flowers, with incised lines imparting a naturalistic appearance to the individual forms.



Bronze mirror 70.7
Kamakura period, early 14th c.
D. 20.1 cm. (7-15/16 in.)

The highly decorated backs of mirrors show that the bronze artisans had mastered their craft. The designs vary greatly and are more painterly than the geometric forms found on Chinese examples. In this mirror, dating from the Kamakura period, a naturalistic scene has replaced Heian decorative motifs. Two miraculous phoenixes, a paulownia tree, bamboo and a stream form a stylized landscape.

The mythological phoenix, regarded as a benevolent bird, was often associated with Buddhist decorative themes. The phoenix was believed to feed only on bamboo seeds and quench its thirst with water from fresh streams. It is a symbol of peace and prosperity. The two holes punched in the top of the mirror indicate that it must at one time have been dedicated to and hung about the neck of a Buddhist deity, perhaps as a wish for good fortune.

Stoneware gourd-shaped vase 64.4
Shino-Oribe ware; Momoyama period, 17th c.
H. 21.5 cm. (8½ in.); D. 10.5 cm. (4⅛ in.)

This gourd-shaped vase is said to have been made at the Motoyashiki kiln at Kujiri in the Mino district, one of the most important kilns producing Shino ware during the Momoyama period. The trellis at the top of the vase, with hanging grape vines, is brown on a thick grayish-white feldspathic glaze. An important innovation of Shino pottery was spontaneously painted designs.

Stoneware teabowl 99.34
By Hon'ami Kōetsu, 1558-1637
Momoyama period, 17th c.
H. 8.7 cm. (3-7/16 in.); D. 12.5 cm. (4-15/16 in.)

Hon'ami Kōetsu was a noted calligrapher, potter, and lacquer artist, as well as a connoisseur of swords. Although he worked closely within the limits of the Raku tradition, his handling of ceramics is characterized by a freedom that caused them to be highly esteemed by tea masters. In this teabowl, calculated irregularities of profile, surface texture and glaze lend the piece a sturdy, chaste simplicity.

Stoneware pitcher 98.457
Karatsu ware; Momoyama period, 17th c.
H. 15.8 cm. (6¼ in.); D. 14.2 cm (5⅝ in)

The production of Karatsu wares in Japan was facilitated by Korean potters captured by Hideyoshi during his invasions of Korea near the end of the sixteenth century. Karatsu wares were made of heavy, rough clay and fairly dark, sober glazes for everyday use. This pitcher, with twisted rope handle and folded-over spout, is of a type known as Chosengaratsu, or "Korean Karatsu." The upper section is covered with a glossy greenish-brown glaze, and the lower half with a crackled cream-colored glaze. It probably was made at a site called Shokodani, one of the most famous Karatsu kilns.

Stoneware vase 64.1
By Nonomura Ninsei; Edo period, 17th c.
H. 24.8 cm. (9¾ in.); W. 27.3 cm. (10¾ in.)

Ninsei traditionally is considered to be the originator of overglaze decorated pottery. His rich palette of enamels enabled potters to decorate their wares with elaborate designs formerly associated with lacquer and textiles. In this rectangular vase with rounded profile, Ninsei used jet black and uneven reddish-brown glazes to achieve the rich textural effect of antique lacquer. Ninsei's signature is incised on the rough, unglazed base.

Stoneware tray 02.220
Made by Ogata Kenzan (1663-1743), decorated by Ogata Kōrin (1656-1716)
Kyoto ware, Edo period
H. 2.8 cm. (1⅛ in.); 21.7 cm. (8-9/16 in.) square

This square low-walled tray is an example of the brothers, Kōrin and Kenzan, working together. The *yatsu-hashi*, or "eight-part bridge" design, which occurs often in Kōrin's work, is an allusion to the Yatsu-hashi, Chapter IX of the *Ise Monogatari*. Iris grow in the foreground and upper right, while a few bold strokes of dark brown suggest the bridge. Compositions in which elements are arranged along the sides, leaving the center area open, were later continued by artists of the Rimpa school. Kōrin's signature is written in the upper left; Kenzan's signature appears on the base.

Stoneware covered dish 73.7
Takamatsu ware, Rihei; Edo period, 3rd quarter 17th c.
H. 16.0 cm. (6¼ in.); D. 29.0 cm. (11-7/16 in.)

This large covered container is by the potter Rihei, who worked at Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku from about 1649 until his death in 1678. Rihei is said to have come from Kyoto. He may also have used clay and glaze materials from the Kyoto area, a factor which explains the resemblance of Takamatsu ware to some types of Kyōyaki (Kyoto ware).

An example of Rihei's finest work, this covered dish reveals his skill in producing such a formal, yet simple shape. The peony blossoms and scroll patterns are rendered in overglaze enamels, with gold discreetly used. The contours of the petals are shown in reserve, with some incised details; there are no outlines. The flat, unglazed base is barely recessed within the slightly stepped-in foot. Lining the inside of the vessel is a thin reddish-brown coating overlaid by a silvery layer which has some blackened areas.

Large white porcelain dish 68.13
Kutani ware; Edo period, 17th c.
H. 7.0 cm. (2¾ in.); D. 35.0 cm. (13¾ in.)

During the seventeenth century, kilns in the Kutani area of Kaga province produced a porcelain ware with a somewhat irregular white body and vigorous overglaze enamel decoration. The designs are varied, but all are characterized by bold application of multi-colored overglaze enamels. In this example, hexagonal shapes cover the inner surface of the bowl in a "tortoise shell" design. Three small studies of birds and animals within hexagons alternate with purely abstract shapes. The outer surface of the bowl is decorated in underglaze blue.

White porcelain jar 56.13
Kakiemon ware; Edo period, 17th c.
H. 40.4 cm. (15-15/16 in.); D. 31.0 cm. (12-3/16 in.)

The red, blue, yellow and green enamels boldly painted on this large jar constitute the basic palette used by the Kakiemon decorators; and the same colors were used with ever-increasing refinement all through the Edo period. Ornamental bands on the neck and foot frame the dominant central design of three large floral medallions with individual asymmetrical floral studies, which contrast with the formally balanced arabesque designs within the narrower bands.

White porcelain dish 66.29
Nabeshima ware; Edo period, late 17th-early 18th c.
H. 6.5 cm. (2½ in.); D. 22.0 cm. (8⅝ in.)

The Nabeshima kilns in Hizen, located a few miles from Arita near Saga city, produced porcelains of exceptionally high quality. On this dish, a single camellia blossom in delicate overglaze enamel colors and underglaze blue is superimposed against two bands of concentric stylized wave patterns. The fine white wave patterns were first drawn on the raw porcelain in ink and the rest of the area filled in with cobalt. When the piece was fired, the ink burned away leaving the same lines silhouetted in white against the cobalt blue.

White porcelain dish 67.15
Kutani ware; Edo period, 17th c.
H. 11.5 cm. (4½ in.); D. 45.7 cm. (18 in.)

Sturdily formed, vigorously decorated examples of Kutani ware provide eloquent proof of Japan's unique ceramic tradition. A bold hexagonal "tortoise shell" design covers the wide flaring rim of this deep dish. The emblems enframed within the scales include a fan, gourd, leaf and flute. On the inner base, a landscape with a bird is contained in a large octagon. Dull-hued overglaze enamels complement the spontaneity of the design.

Wood Bodhisattva 09.343
Suiko period, 552-645
H. 81.2 cm. (32 in.)

Japanese Buddhist sculpture during the Suiko period might be described as reflecting an international Buddhist style. The full, oval face and child-like proportions of the body of this Bodhisattva are related to both Chinese and Korean prototypes. The figure was carved from a single block of wood, lacquered and covered with gold leaf. An elaborate necklace adorns the Bodhisattva and embellishes the simple carving. Both arms, the pedestal and the fine flowing scarves are later restorations. Similar figures are the Six Kannon in Hōryūji and a Kannon in the Nezu collection.

Dry lacquer Bodhisattva 66.34
Tempyō period, ca. 790
H. 61.0 cm. (24 in.); W. 17.5 cm. (6⅞ in.)

In contrast to the rigid frontality that characterizes earlier Buddhist sculpture, Tempyō period sculpture is imbued with delicate grace and movement. This Bodhisattva steps forward and turns slightly to one side in a gesture similar to the lacquer sculpture in the Dempōdo at Hōryūji and the musicians in the Phoenix Hall of the Byōdōin at Uji. The position of the two hands suggests that they may have held a musical instrument. The figure, executed in dry lacquer, was made in three sections: head, torso and legs. Some traces of the original gilding still are visible. The arms and earlobes are later restorations. Holes in the hair and chest suggest that the Bodhisattva was once adorned with a crown and necklace.

Miroku Bosatsu 62.21
Fujiwara period, late 12th c.
H. 206.9 cm. (81 in.); W. 114.0 cm. (44⅞ in.)

In contrast to the somber, somewhat reserved Buddhist images of earlier periods, Buddhist sculpture dating from the late Heian period is marked by a gentleness of mood and posture. This seated figure depicts Miroku Bosatsu, who is to descend from the Tushita Heaven to preach the Law at the end of the present *kalpa* or cycle of time. The broad, classically modeled face and precise linear arrangement of flattened drapery pleats are typical of twelfth-century Buddhist sculpture. The two forearms are late additions.

Wood Bodhisattva 09.345
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 62.8 cm. (24¾ in.); W. 43.2 cm. (17 in.)

The seated Bodhisattva is depicted with one hand raised, as if in the midst of a discourse. Although the eyes are lowered, the facial features reveal a new, more personal expression than is characteristic of usual Kamakura sculpture. The high chignon and drapery folds have a greater sense of plasticity than does sculpture of the preceding Heian period. Some traces of lacquer and *kirikane* (cut gold) remain on the body and robes. The lower section of the figure probably is a later replacement. The figure is closely related to the work of Kaikei and may even be attributed to his hand.

Wood Kongō Yasha 09.346
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 42.9 cm. (16⅞ in.); W. 27.8 cm. (10-15/16 in.)

Kongō Yasha is one of the Godai Myōō, or Five Radiant Kings. Although ferocious in aspect, the Five Radiant Kings actually are benevolent, for their task is to protect worshippers by frightening away evil spirits or to destroy passion and ignorance. This wooden figure of Kongō Yasha is coated with gesso and painted. Some vestiges of *kirikane* are visible on the robes. Kongō Yasha has three heads and six arms. Each hand holds an attribute: *vajra* (symbolic diamond thunderbolt), arrow, bell, *cakra* (wheel), bow and sword. The carving is similar to that done by Unkei; the sculpture might possibly be a school piece.

Wood Jizō 65.19
Kamakura period, late 13th c.
H. 35.5 cm. (14 in.); W. 12.0 cm. (4¾ in.)

Jizō, the savior of those beings condemned to Purgatory or Hell and protector of women and children, was especially popular during the Kamakura period. The most gentle of all Buddhist deities, he is often represented as a handsome youth. In this image, the head and large hands are carved separately. The drapery folds are decorated with *kirikane* which is unusually well preserved; the wide borders of floral ornament probably are based on Chinese prototypes. In his left hand, Jizō carries a pearl to illuminate the Region of Darkness. In this image Jizō is depicted without the pilgrim staff which he usually carries in his right hand.

Wood Guardian Figures 49.20 and 49.21
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 233.5 cm. (92 in.)

Kamakura period sculpture reveals a new concern for realism and dynamic action. This pair of guardian figures, or Nio, exhibit the tense exaggerated musculature and anatomical distortion which resulted in deities of superhuman appearance. Numerous wooden blocks of cryptomeria wood, ingeniously shaped, are fitted together and held with pegs, glue and double-pronged iron staples. On the tenon which projects downward from the sole of the left foot of 49.20 is a three-character ink inscription which gives the name of the temple from which the figure came, the Kagen-ji or Iehara-dera in Sakai.

Lacquer incense box 67.9
Kamakura period, 1192-1336
H. 8.3 cm. (3¼ in.); D. 25.0 cm. (9⅞ in.)

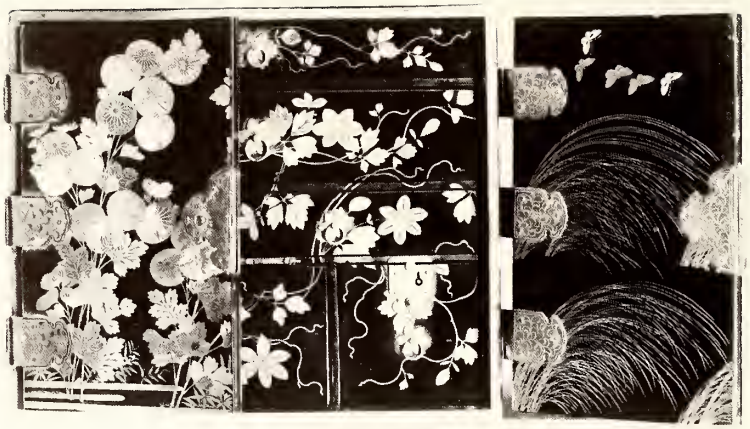
During the Kamakura period, lacquer artisans in the area of Kamakura developed a technique whereby designs were deeply incised on a wooden surface and then lacquered. The technique, which is said to imitate a Chinese prototype, is called *Kamakura-bori*. A single peony blossom in the center of the cover of the incense box is surrounded by serrated leaves. Deeply carved floral contours give the box a strongly sculptural appearance. The contrast of red and black lacquer is similar to Negoro-type lacquerware.

Lacquer pitcher 67.5
Momoyama period, late 16th c.
H. 35.5 cm. (14 in.); D. 19.3 cm. (7⅝ in.)

Priests of the Negoro Temple in Kii province began to make lacquer wares as early as the Kamakura period. The elegant shape of this pitcher, based on Chinese prototypes, is unusually graceful. Centuries of wear have worn away the red lacquer in places to reveal the black lacquer ground, thereby enhancing the antique effect so treasured by Japanese connoisseurs.

Lacquer cabinet 44.20
Momoyama period, late 16th c.
H. 28.0 cm. (11 in.); W. 33.4 cm. (13⅛ in.); depth, 21.3 cm. (8⅜ in.)

This small cabinet, or *kodansu*, is decorated with mother-of-pearl and gold. The chrysanthemums which ornament the outside of the cabinet are done in three different techniques: 1. *Hiramakie* (literally, "flat-sown picture"), in which the decoration is actually in low relief with the surfaces in the same plane, and is built up of lacquer alone. 2. *Nashi-ji* (literally, "pear ground"), which consists of gold flecks sunk into the lacquer at varying depths. In this technique, the gold is placed on the surface and covered with a layer of lacquer. The process is repeated for each successive layer, which must dry before the next is applied. 3. Mother-of-pearl inlaid directly into the surface. Floral designs, autumn grass and small butterflies ornament the interior of the cabinet and the six drawers. The metal fittings are of gilded chiseled bronze.



Lacquer box 04.36
Signed Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637) Edo period
H. 23.2 cm. (9⅛ in.); L. 29.2 cm. (11½ in.); W. 23.8 cm. (9⅜ in.)

The technique of inlaying mother-of-pearl designs, originally introduced to Japan from T'ang dynasty China (618-907), had been completely adapted and revitalized by the later years of the Fujiwara period (897-1185). During the Edo period, masters like Kōetsu introduced bold new designs and materials that appealed to the sumptuous taste of the new capital. The cover and four sides of this lacquer box are decorated with sprays of blossoming plum branches inlaid with mother-of-pearl and lead. The design, rather than being restricted to a single surface, encloses the entire object. Metal fittings with relief designs are attached on two sides of the box. Kōetsu's signature is written on the inside red lacquered surface of the cover.

(Detail)

Buddhist sutra, the *Kan-Fugen-Bosatsu-Gyōbō-kyō* 68.60
Gold and silver on blue paper
Fujiwara period, 897-1185
H. 25.4 cm. (10 in.); W. 769.0 cm. (25 ft. 2¾ in.)

The *Kan-Fugen-Bosatsu-Gyōbō-kyō*, Sutra on Meditating on Fugen Bodhisattva, is a one-fascicle sutra believed to have been preached three months before the nirvana of the Buddha. In this sutra the Buddha teaches how to meditate on Fugen and how to repent and purify the evils resulting from the actions of the six sensory organs. Since the sutra is a continuation of the *Fugen-Bosatsu-Kambo-bou*, of the *Hoke-kyō*, followers of the Tendai sect regarded it as the concluding sutra of the *Hoke-kyō*. This sutra was translated into Chinese in the second quarter of the fifth century by Dharmamitra of the Liu Sung dynasty.

The frontispiece, painted in gold and silver on indigo paper, depicts the Bodhisattva Fugen seated on his vehicle, an elephant, in the midst of a landscape. The vigorously painted clouds, trees and mountains are derived ultimately from T'ang dynasty Chinese landscape paintings.

Hōrōkaku Mandara 29.2
Color and gold on silk
Fujiwara period, 12th c.
H. 144.4 cm. (56⅞ in.); W. 86.7 cm. (34⅛ in.)

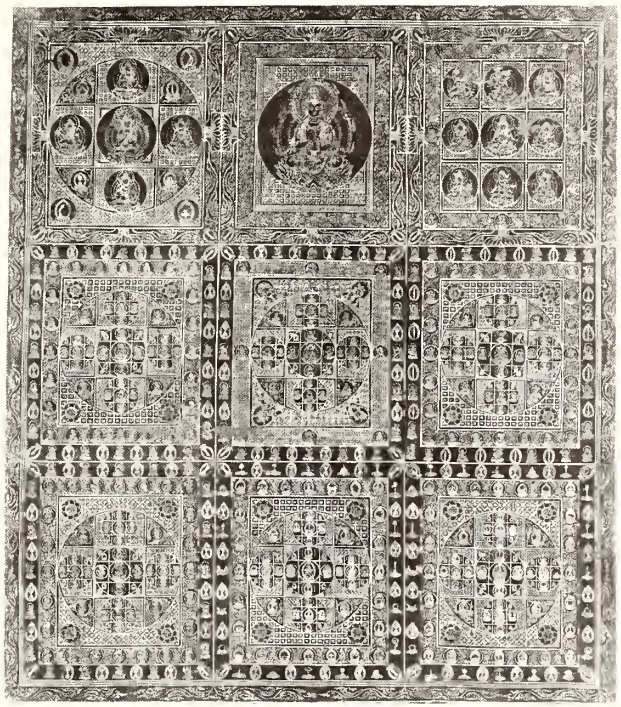
The iconography of the Hōrōkaku Mandara is based on descriptions found in Buddhist sutras. Sakyamuni is seated within a multi-storied structure preaching the Law, flanked by two white-bodied multi-armed Bodhisattvas, each with four faces. Guardians of the Four Directions are grouped about the Wheel of the Law which is placed on a golden lotus standing before the tower. Four kneeling Bodhisattvas holding ritual implements flank the Guardian Kings. The single kneeling monk placed in the left foreground holds an incense burner, and is the only variation in the symmetrical arrangement of the composition. Brilliant mineral colors, *kirikane* and delicate outline are used to depict the architecture, background, and Buddhist deities.

Nyoirin Kannon 61.6
Ink, color, silver and gold on silk
Heian period, 12th c.
H. 77.7 cm. (30⅝ in.); W. 40.5 cm. (16 in.)

The six-armed Bodhisattva is shown seated before a double halo upon a lotus throne which is set on a rocky promentory surrounded by water. Decorative clouds and miniature floral details symbolize a landscape background. This aspect of Kannon is clearly identifiable by the small image of Amida in the Bodhisattva's headdress, as well as the wheel of the Buddhist law and the jewel which are held in two of the diety's hands, symbolizing the deity's ability to respond to the prayers of the faithful. The elegant, pliant grace of the youthful figure and the careful attention to textile patterns, which are executed in silver paint and cut silver leaf, are typical of Buddhist icons painted during the Heian period.

Bodhisattva Fugen 63.6
Ink, color, gold and silver on silk
Heian period, 12th c.
H. 155.6 cm. (61¼ in.); W. 83.1 cm. (32¾ in.)

The Bodhisattva Fugen, wearing a jeweled crown, is seated cross-legged atop a lotus throne on the back of his six-tusked white elephant. The expression of serene majesty on the Bodhisattva's face, as well as the sumptuously drawn jewelry and drapery details, result in a devotional image of extreme profundity. Images of this Bodhisattva, who was closely related to the Lotus Sutra in the Tendai sect, were quite popular during the Heian period. Although the delicacy of the linear depiction is derived from earlier Heian traditions, there are also indications of a more powerful expression and new use of color, heralding artistic developments that were to become characteristic during the succeeding Kamakura period. The image is one of the largest Heian paintings of Fugen known.



Ryōkai Mandara 66.4 and 66.5
Gold on purple-dyed silk
Heian or early Kamakura period, 12th c.
H. 74.3 cm. (29¼ in.); W. 64.8 cm. (25½ in.)

Mandaras, or diagrammatic pictures representing the cosmic nature of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other divine beings, are regarded as symbols of the universe and are used as an aid to meditation in Esoteric Buddhism. Two large mandaras, representing the Kongōkai and Taizōkai, frequently are mounted on permanent wooden screens at right angles to the axes of the image platform in the *kondō* of Shingon temples. The Kongōkai, or "diamond world," symbolizes the non-material world, while the Taizōkai, or "womb world," symbolizes the material world. Innumerable Buddhist dieties and symbols are executed in delicate gold lines on a purple-dyed silk ground.

Gohimitsu Bosatsu 68.75
Ink and color on silk
Kamakura period, late 12th or early 13th c.
H. 56.8 cm. (22⅜ in.); W. 42.5 cm. (16¾ in.)

One of the most secret of the mandaras used by the Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism is the Gohimitsu Bosatsu, or the "Secret Five" Bodhisattva. The white-hued central image is Kongōsatta, who grasps a double-vājrā and a vājrā-bell in either hand. On the right is Aikongō (Passion), depicted in green and holding a banner staff. Behind Aikongō is the red-hued image of Yokukongō (Desire), who holds an arrow symbolic of the thrust of Karma, Love or Desire. On the left is Mankongō (Pride), yellow in color with both hands making vājrā-fists. Behind Mankongō is the white-hued Shōkukongō (Sense-joy), who embraces the central image of Kongōsatta. All five figures wear elaborately designed headdresses and are seated on a large lotus throne before a flame-bordered mandorla. The entire group is enclosed within a white moon-disc. According to Buddhist texts, the Gohimitsu mandara is symbolic of the above-mentioned four causes of human distress embodied in the Bodhi-mind of Kongōsatta.

Bodhisattva Fugen and attendants 63.14
Ink, color and gold on silk
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 140.4 cm. (55¼ in.); W. 73.0 cm. (28¾ in.)

Fugen is the Bodhisattva of all-pervading compassion and special patron of believers in the Lotus Sutra. He is the right-hand attendant of Sakyamuni Buddha, and usually is contrasted with Monju (Manjusri) who represents the knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment of the Buddha. In this painting, Fugen is clothed in a princely costume and rides on his vehicle, a six-tusked elephant, symbol of sagacity and prudence. Two Bodhisattvas, ten female deities, a young boy, and two Heavenly Kings, drawn in slightly smaller scale, flank the central image. The growth of the Yamato-e tradition is apparent in the intrusion of a purely Japanese style female attendant holding a bowl. The extensive use of *kirikane* also is noteworthy. Bold use of line and color in the depiction of the figures are indicative of a Kamakura date.

Kongara and Seitaka 70.27 and 70.28
Takuma Chōga, fl. ca. 1250
Ink, colors and gold on silk
Takuma school, Kamakura period, mid-13th c.
H. 125.0 cm. (49¼ in.); W. 41.5 cm. (16⅜ in.)

Kongara and Seitaka are the two most popular of the eight attendants of the Shingon deity Fudō. These two young miracle workers, whose names in Sanskrit literally mean servant, usually flank an image of Fudō. Seitaka leaning upon his stick would be to the left, and Kongara, his hands clasped together in a pose of adoration, would be to the right of Fudō. They both stand upon rocks surrounded by turbulent waters.

A seal which reads Chōga is affixed above the water near the outside edge of each painting. An artist named Chōga is recorded to have been active in 1253. Artists of the Takuma school often use "*ga*" in their names. Takuma painting, which manifests a merging of contemporary Chinese influences with traditional Japanese styles, is noted for the bold, strong use of line. In these paintings the color has been extended over parts of the lines creating the impression that the brush strokes are more modulated than they are in fact. The delicate details of the textiles are better preserved on Kongara than on his companion.

Nehan 70.30
Ink, colors and gold on silk
Buddhist school, Kamakura period, mid-14th c.
H. 196.2 cm. (77¼ in.); W. 190.0 cm. (74¾ in.)

The death of the Buddha has historically been the most emotionally charged of all the scenes from the life of the founder of Buddhism. Here the artist has made the scene even more poignant than usual by depicting Shakyamuni at the moment of his departure from the world of men. Surrounding the deathbed are various deities of the Buddhist pantheon and monks whose grief-stricken facial expressions exhibit the intense realism of Kamakura art. The Buddha's mother, Queen Māyā, being led by Jizō, is shown descending from the heavens upon a cloud. Among the animals in the foreground is a six-tusked elephant which suggests that some of the beasts may be vehicles of the assembled deities while others represent the animal kingdom.

Portraits from the Thirty-six Master Poets scroll
50.24 and 50.25
Attributed to Fujiwara Nobuzane, 1176-ca. 1265
Ink and color on paper
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 27.9 cm. (11 in.); W. 51.1 cm. (20⅛ in.)

During the Heian period the works of thirty-six poets were established as classics. The master poets were raised almost to the position of deities and their portraits were often painted to serve as examples to students of literature. The depiction of the poets seated cross-legged on straw mats, known as *Agedatami*, distinguishes these paintings from the similar scroll fragments known as the *Satakebon*. The Freer Gallery of Art is fortunate in possessing three fragments of the *Agedatami* series with portraits attributed to Fujiwara Nobuzane and calligraphy attributed to Fujiwara no Tameie.

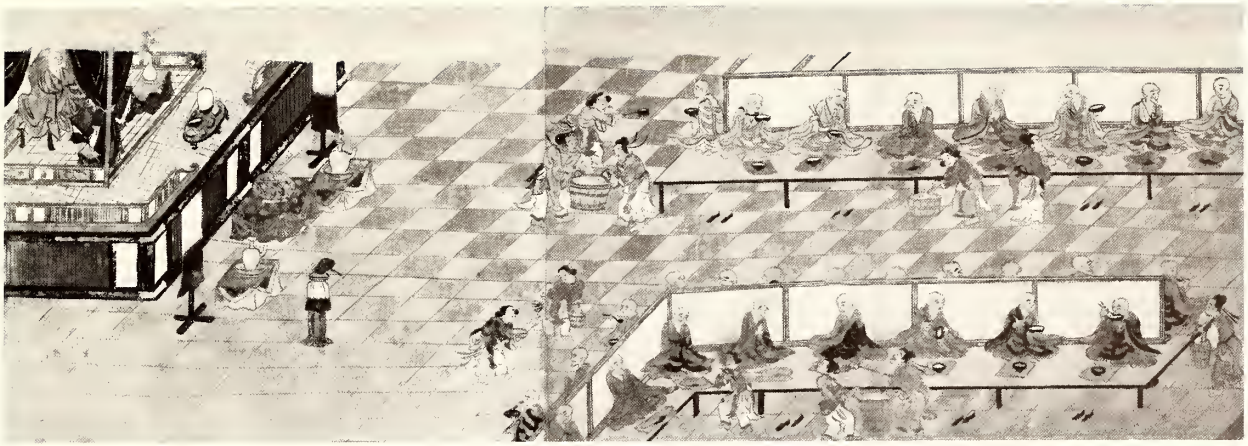
The portraits of the poetess Saigu-Nyogo Yoshiko and the poet Minamoto no Kintada are excellent examples of Japanese concern for abstract pattern and design. Only the head of the poetess is visible amid the folds of her sumptuous, multi-layered robes. Upon the black ground of the poet's voluminous robe, the artist has made skillful use of his ink to create a subtle textile pattern. A biography together with one poem appears at the right of each portrait.

(Detail)

(Detail)

Miracles performed by Jizō 07.375a
Ink and color on paper
Kamakura period, 13th c.
H. 30.5 cm. (12 in.); W. 1431.9 cm. (46 ft. 11¾ in.)

Jizō, one of the most prominent Bodhisattvas in popular Mahayana Buddhism, is the embodiment of compassion and service to mankind. He is the guardian of children and protector of travelers and warriors; he intervenes in Hell for the sake of those suffering there. In the second detail from the handscroll showing several rooms of a palace, a lady and nobleman are depicted in intimate conversation. In the adjoining room at the right, a lady is peering at the couple through a hole she has made in the paper-covered sliding panel. The vigorous brushwork and interest in anecdotal detail are typical of Yamato-e painting during the Kamakura period. This handscroll is the earliest example of the subject known.



(Detail)

The Life of Kōbō-daishi 66.10
Ink, color and gold on paper
Yamato-e school, Kamakura period, late 13th c.
H. 32.5 cm. (12¾ in.); L. 665.0 cm. (12 ft. 9 in.)

Kōbō-daishi (Kūkai, 774-835) was the founder of the Shingon sect in Japan. He was initiated into the doctrines and rituals of esoteric Buddhism during a trip to China, and on his return to Japan in 806 established the Shingon center at Mt. Koya and the Tōji in Kyoto.

The brisk brush drawing in this detail from the handscroll, one of a pair, depicts the preparation of food for a banquet of 500 monks following Kōbō-daishi's ordination. The witty, animated figures are typical of Yamato-e school narrative handscrolls of the Kamakura period.

(Detail)

Illustrated biography of Priest Ippen 59.18
Ink and color on paper
Yamato-e school, Kamakura period, 14th c.
H. 30.5 cm. (12 in.); W. 205.8 cm. (6 ft. 9 in.)

Ippen (1239-89) was a Buddhist priest who founded the Ji sect. He joined the priesthood at the age of fourteen, eventually becoming a devotee of the Pure Land or Jōdo sect of Buddhism. Because of his country-wide missionary tours, Ippen sometimes is referred to as the Wandering Sage. This short handscroll, a fragment of an illustrated biography of Ippen, deals with Taa, one of Ippen's disciples who traveled throughout the country proselytizing at the same time. Taa is shown visiting the Zenkōji Monastery in Nagano. The animated, sometimes satirical, representations of both laymen and monks successfully evoke the variegated pageant as well as the noise and bustle of a Japanese temple courtyard.

(Detail)

(Detail)

History of the Yūzūnembutsu sect 58.11 and 59.13
Ink, color and gold on paper
Yamato-e school, Kamakura period, 14th c.
H. 29.0 cm. (11-7/16 in.); W. 1416.3 cm. (46 ft. 5⅝ in.); H. 26.7 cm. (10½ in.); W. 1116.1 cm. (36 ft. 7⅜ in.), respectively

Many narrative picture handscrolls, commonly called *emakimono*, were painted during the twelfth to fourteenth century. One of the most popular of these handscrolls depicted the history of the evangelical Yūzūnembutsu sect founded by Ryōnin Shōnin (1072-1132). Ryōnin taught that recitation of Amida Buddha's name was the only means of attaining the goal of rebirth in paradise. The earliest Yūzūnembutsu handscroll still extant is dated 1314. The first detail depicts Ryōnin Shōnin as a priest. After the Amitābha Buddha had appeared to Shōnin in a dream and explained the way to be reborn into the Buddha's paradise, Ryōnin began on the 9th day of the 9th month in 1124 to lead the people into the faith of the Yūzūnembutsu. He is seen here converting people from all classes and walks of life. The second detail illustrates a miraculous event said to have taken place during the Shōka era (1257-58). During an epidemic, a village leader dreamt that a company of demons, including the God of Epidemics, attempted to force the gate of his home. The village leader told the demons that his family was about to begin a special Nembutsu service, and as a result, the God spared the family. The Yūzūnembutsu handscrolls are also represented by a fine specimen in the collection of the Seiryōji in Kyoto and by two rolls divided between the Chicago Art Institute and the Cleveland Museum of Art. There is also a woodblock-printed version in Japan, which is a landmark of Muromachi period woodblock printing.

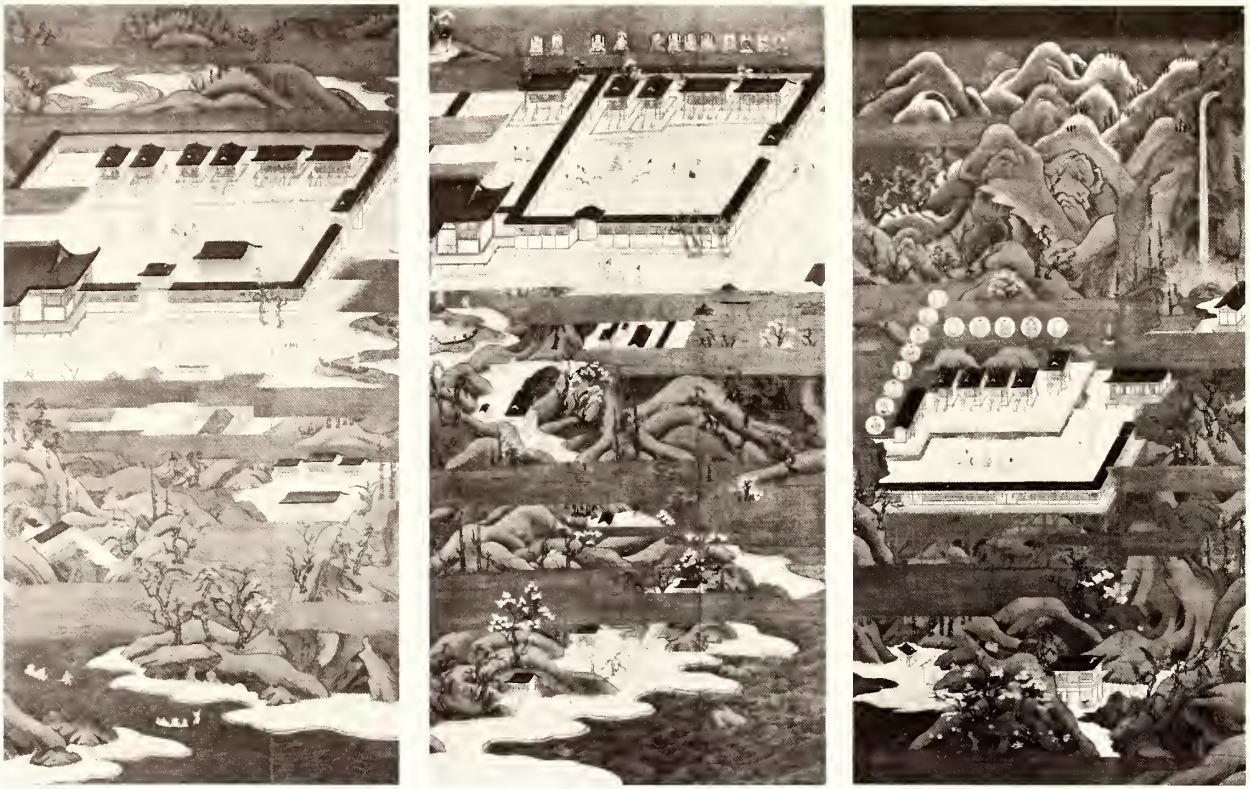
Kempō poetry competition 06.4
Ink and color on paper
Yamato-e school, Namboku-chō, 14th c.
H. 32.6 cm. (12-13/16 in.); W. 668.7 cm. (22 ft.)

According to the inscription, many worshippers were gathered for an evening service at the Tohoku-in when pairs of people from different trades and professions held a poetry contest, basing their poems on the moon shining in a clear sky. The detail selected for illustration depicts a physician and a fortune-teller. The physician is seated with an attendant by his side who is grinding medicine in a large shallow bowl. The fortune-teller sits facing the others and holds a wand with *gohei* (paper strips) attached to it. Thin, disciplined outlines reinforced by washes of bright color capture the animated gestures of the figures in traditional Yamato-e style. This painting is based on an earlier version dating from the Kempō period (1213-18).

(Detail)

Prince Shōtoku as the Bodhisattva Jizō 62.13
Ink and color on silk
Yamato-e school, Namboku-chō period, late 14th c.
H. 124.7 cm. (49⅛ in.); W. 68.9 cm. (27⅛ in.)

Shōtoku-taishi is so revered by the Japanese people that a cult of worship has grown up around him. Images of Shōtoku as a young boy, illustrated biographies and mature portraits are found in Japanese museums and temples. This image of Shōtoku dressed in pilgrim's robes and holding the pilgrim's staff usually associated with the Bodhisattva Jizō is somewhat unusual. His introspective expression and youthful, gentle appearance suggest that the portrait actually represents Shōtoku in the guise of Jizō. The brush drawing in the robes and figure is strong and assured. A delicate wood-grain pattern appears on Shōtoku's costume. Equally delicate are the sprigs of chestnut on the tree in the upper right corner of the painting.



Kumano Mandara 58.17, 58.18 and 58.19
Ink, color and gold on silk
Yamato-e school, Namboku-chō-Ashikaga period, late 14th-early 15th c.
H. 117.7 cm. (46⅜ in.); W. 59.6 cm. (23½ in.)

During the Kamakura period, following centuries of accomodation between Buddhism and Shintō, numerous *mandara* were produced which indicate the identity of certain Shintō and Buddhist deities. According to the theory of *honjisuijaku*, each Shintō deity was a *suijaku* (manifestation) of a Buddhist deity, the *honji* (source). These paintings are unusual in their representation of the three mountain shrines of Kumano and their associated deities in three separate hanging scrolls instead of as a single composition. In the *mandara* of the Nachi Shrine, dedicated to the spirit of the Nachi Waterfall, the thirteen deities of Kumano are depicted in their Buddhist (*honji*) form, each seated on a lotus and encircled by an aureole. The *mandara* depicting the *Hongu* (Main Shrine) depicts the same deities in their corresponding Shintō forms, as kings enthroned above their respective shrines. That of the *Shingu* (New Shrine) simply represents the shrine buildings with only the sacred mirrors therein to symbolize the unseen presence of the natural spirit. Pilgrimage to Kumano was widely practiced during the late Heian and Kamakura periods. In these *mandara*, pilgrims of various social classes have entered the courtyards of the shrines to worship. The shrine buildings are rendered in realistic detail in a colorful landscape setting in the Yamato-e tradition. The artist has cleverly made use of mica to indicate the glistening sand within the compounds and along the walks which link them.

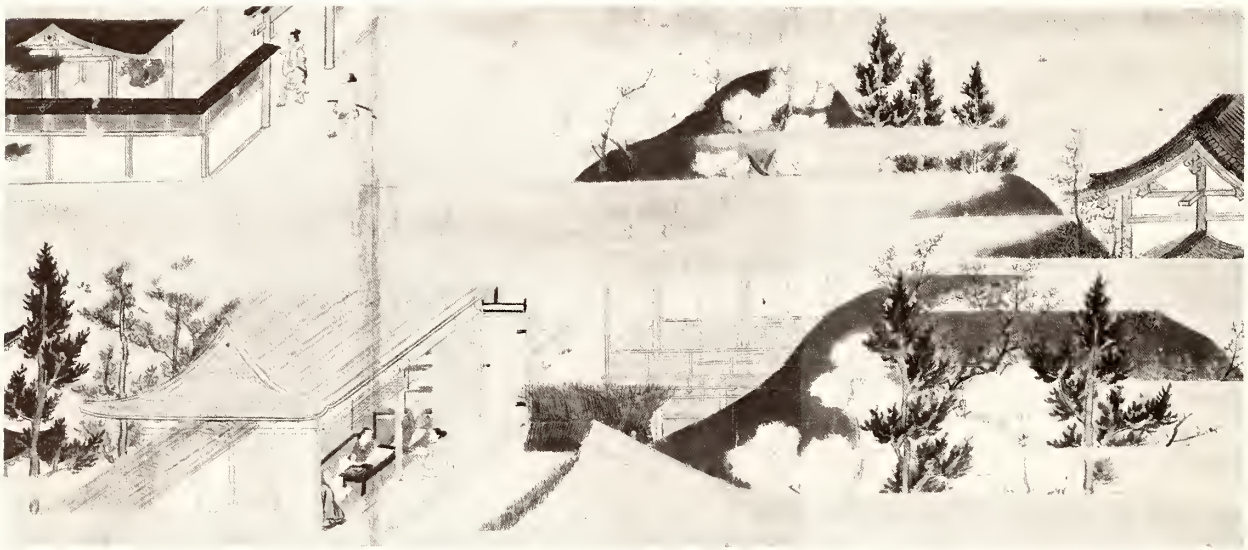
The Deity of Kasuga Wakamiya 64.13
Ink, color and gold on silk
Yamato-e school, Namboku-chō-Ashikaga period, 14th c.
H. 85.3 cm. (33⅝ in.); W. 39.6 cm. (15-9/16 in.)

The deity of Kasuga Wakamiya, a minor shrine belonging to the Shinto shrine Kasuga Jinja in Nara, was frequently represented in the guise of a noble youth. In this painting, the boy-deity is clothed in voluminous court robes and holds a sceptre in one hand. His long black hair hangs down well below his knees in two sidelocks, adorned with ornamental tassels. The appealing, almost shy expression on the youth's face lends the image a sense of noble dignity. A rocky plateau, tilted slightly forward, forms a natural pedestal for the deity.

Arhat 04.297
Attributed to Ryōzen; ink and color on silk
Namboku-chō period, late 14th c.
H. 113.1 cm. (40-9/16 in.); W. 58.8 cm. (23⅛ in.)

In later Buddhist theology, especially in the Zen sect, Arhats were revered as saints who had attained both wisdom and occult powers, but who refrained from entering Nirvāna in order to sustain the Buddhist law until the coming of Maitreya. Arhats usually are somewhat grotesque in appearance, reflecting their intense inner struggle to attain salvation. In this painting, one of a set of sixteen in the Freer Gallery of Art collection, the Arhat is shown seated, running a Buddhist rosary through his fingers with lips parted as if reciting. A ferocious figure carrying a sword is at his side. Although the painting is unsigned, on the basis of style it is attributed to Ryōzen, an artist who was active during the late fourteenth century.

(Detail)



(Detail)

Geppōji Kenritsu Engi (History of the Founding of the Geppōji) 61.23 and 61.24
Ink, color and gold on paper
Yamato-e school, Ashikaga period, 15th c.
H. 34.5 cm. (13⅝ in.); W. 1066.0 cm. (35 ft.); H. 34.5 cm. (13⅝ in.); W. 1137.7 cm. (37 ft. 4 in.), respectively

The text, dated 1495, is written by Fujiwara-Ason-Kinnatsu to describe the miraculous events surrounding the founding of the Geppōji in Settsu province by the Priest Nichiren (1222-82). The original temple was razed in 1545 and following repeated disasters, was rebuilt, only to be destroyed again in 1945. The illustrations accompanying the text are by an anonymous painter working in the Yamato-e tradition. In the first detail, Nichiren, together with a group of followers searching for a temple site, have landed on a sandy, pine-shaded shore. The second detail depicts some of the buildings within the completed temple compound. Kinnatsu's precise descriptions of the scenery and temples suggest that he actually may have visited the Geppōji.

(Detail)

Utatane Monogatari (The Tale of a Nap) 61.8
Ink and color on paper
Yamato-e school, Ashikaga period
H. 13.8 cm. (5½ in.); W. 1087.3 cm. (35 ft. 8⅛ in.)

Paintings executed in fine ink outline, or *hakubyo*, are rare in Japan. In this handscroll the artist contrasts the delicate outline with more intense black areas of cursive flowing hair and angular geometric architectural patterns. There is an occasional touch of light reddish color on the lips of both men and women. Each section of text, relating the romantic tale of a princess who encounters a handsome young man in her dreams, is followed by an illustration. Following a series of adverse circumstances, climaxing in a suicide attempt by the princess, the two lovers were united by the miraculous intervention of the Buddha. A pair of handscrolls in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, depicts the same legend.

(Detail)

Fragment of the *Yūjo Monogatari* 72.6
Ink on paper
Yamato-e school, Ashikaga period, 14th c.
H. 16.3 cm. (6⅜ in.); W. 42.3 cm. (16⅝ in.)

The painting is one section of a handscroll illustrating the *Yūjo monogatari* or "Tale of a Courtesan." The tale recounts a courtesan's tragic love for a young official whose name or official rank she does not know. After giving birth to the official's child, the courtesan, who always thinks longingly of the young official, allows no one to care for the baby but herself. Her yearning for the young official eventually results in her death, and the orphaned child is later adopted by a man, who unbeknownst to either one, is actually her paternal grandfather. The story continues, following events in the life of the child, whose only clue to her father's identity is a brocade bag the young official had given to her deceased mother.

This fragment is one of the earlier examples of the *hakubyo* style of painting. Neither colors nor washes are used, and the thin tight lines contrast well with the dark, bold patterns of the women's hair. The fluid calligraphy scattered over the painting balances the angularity of the architectural elements.

Fugen 04.202
Takuma Eiga, ca. 1310
Ink and light color on silk
Takuma school, Ashikaga period, 14th c.
H. 67.7 cm. (26⅝ in.); W. 41.1 cm. (16-3/16 in.)

Although Eiga is an important precursor of Japanese monochrome ink painting, little is known of his background and training. In this small hanging scroll depicting the Bodhisattva Fugen, the artist combined precise, fine outline drawing in the figure of the Bodhisattva and his elephant, with more bold, racing line in the foreground rock and tree. Equally important is the casual attitude in which Fugen is shown seated on the back of his elephant reading. The more formal hieratic type of image meant solely to be worshipped has been replaced by an almost humorously irreverent figure which reflects the influence of Zen Buddhist tenets. Only the simply outlined halo suggests the divine status of the long-haired Bodhisattva. Eiga's seal is affixed in the lower left corner of the painting.

Kannon on a rock 68.61
Attributed to Moku'an Rei'en (died 1344)
Ink on silk
Muromachi Suibōku school, 14th c.
H. 103.0 cm. (40½ in.); W. 41.0 cm. (16⅛ in.)

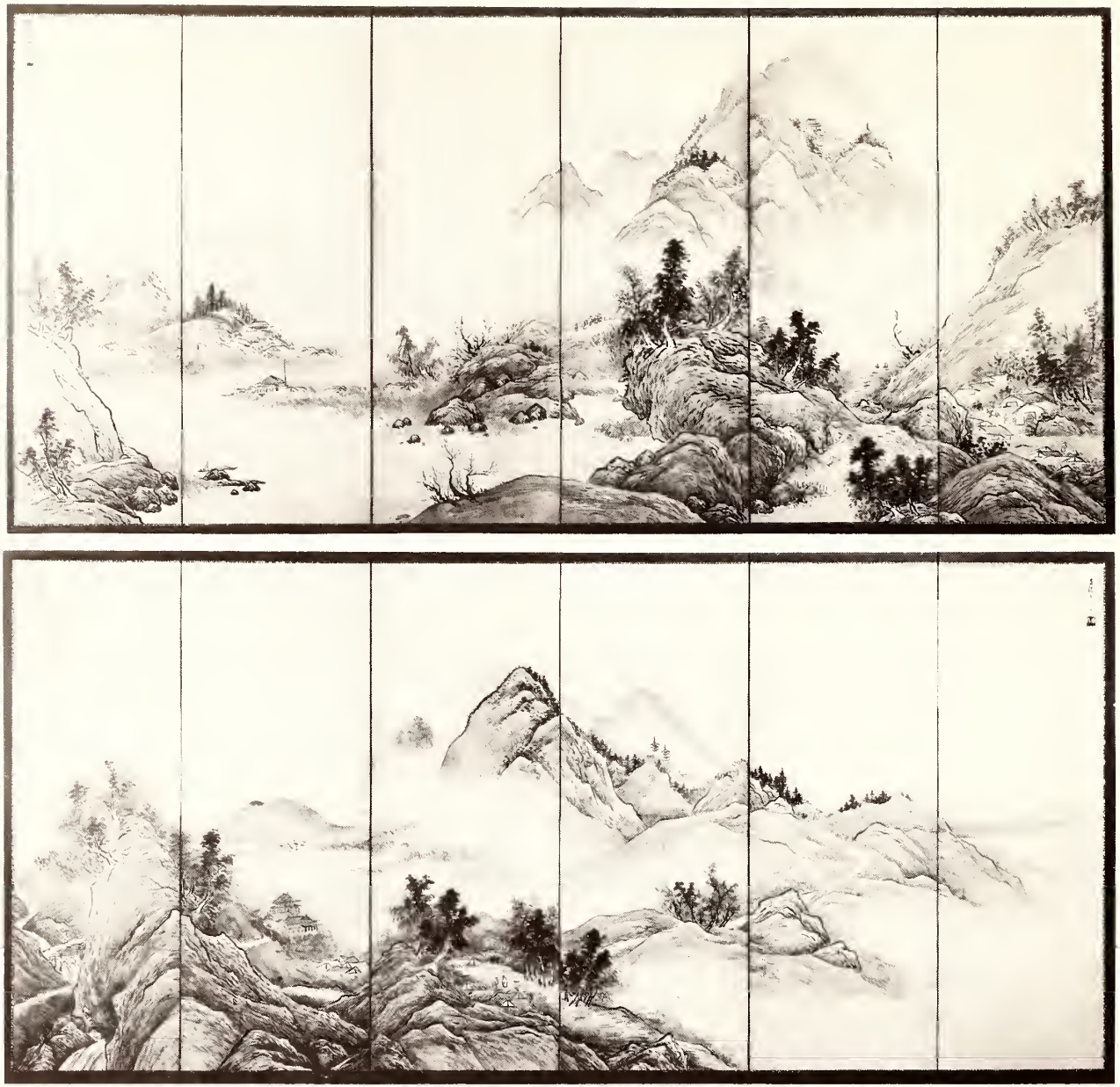
Moku'an was a pioneer of pure ink painting in Japan. A Zen monk, he traveled to China sometime between 1326 and 1329, and remained there for the rest of his life. The informal, almost nonchalant attitude of the Goodess of Mercy in this painting is in accord with Zen ideals. A few simple lines and washes depict the figure, robes, and rocky cliff. The encomium at the top of the painting was written by Liao-an Ch'ing-yü (1288-1363), a Chinese Ch'an (Zen) monk who resided in Japan.

Kanzan 60.23
Kaō, fl. 14th c.; ink on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school, 14th c.
H. 102.5 cm. (40⅜ in.); W. 30.9 cm. (12-3/16 in.)

Kaō, a Zen priest, was one of the first Japanese artists to depict Zen subjects in pure ink. Little is known of the artist's life, and only a few paintings from his hand are still extant. Zen painters were fond of depicting Kanzan, a Chinese monk who lived during the T'ang dynasty. Kanzan is said to have stayed occasionally at the Kuo-ch'ing-ssu on T'ien-t'ai-shan, where he met another monk, of equally carefree temperament, named Jittoku. The two were often depicted together. In this scroll, Kanzan stands with arms carelessly folded behind his back. His disheveled hair and tattered garments are indicated by the most economical of brush strokes. The keen intellectual personality of the monk is deftly revealed in his alert facial expression. Two of Kaō's seals are affixed in the lower right corner of the painting.

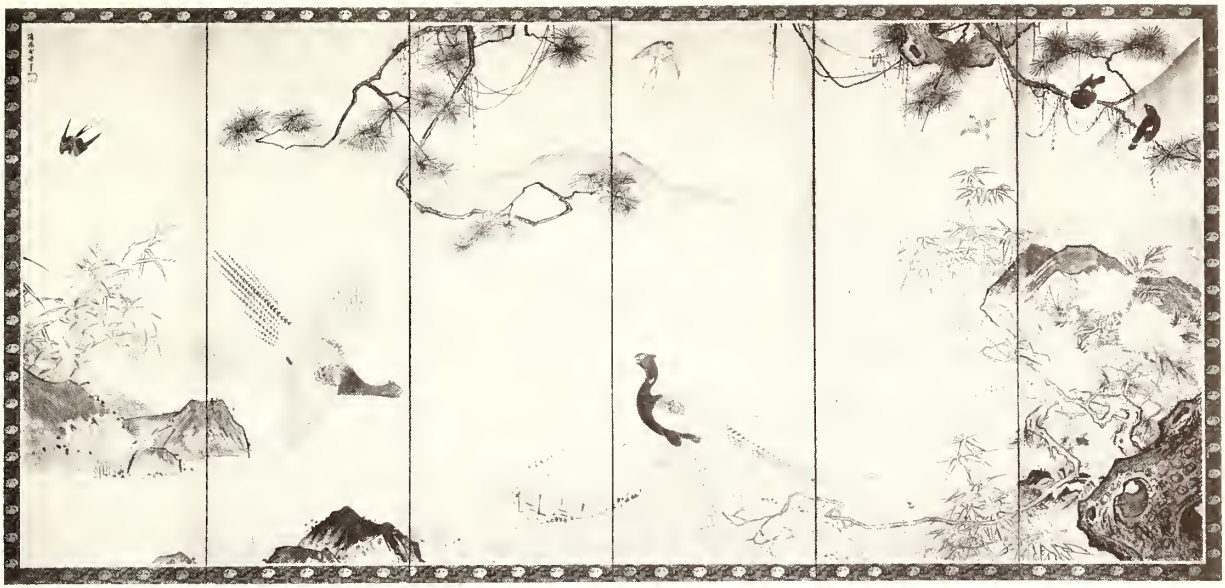
Kao-feng Yüan-miao 11.317
Chūan Shinkō, mid-15th c.
Ink on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school, Ashikaga period
H. 58.4 cm. (23 in.); W. 36.8 cm. (14½ in.)

A pioneer of the *suiboku* (ink) painting movement in the mid-15th century was the monk-painter Chūan Shinkō, who served as a priest of the Kenchōji temple at Kamakura. Shinkō's reputation in the art world has often been thought to derive more from the fame of his student, Shōkei, than from his own paintings. However, this work by Shinkō, a portrait of the Chinese monk Kao-feng Yüan-miao (1238-95), demonstrates that he was a very competent artist of Zen themes. The source of inspiration for Shinkō's work may well have been a Chinese portrait brought to Japan. It is a very personal portrait depicting the holy man as an ascetic. The concentration and religious fervor of Kao-feng's face is enframed by his bushy hair. The robe is delineated in bold strokes while the face, in contrast, is executed in delicate line.



Landscapes 58.4 and 58.5
Sesshū, 1420-1506; ink and color on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school, Ashikaga period, 15th-16 c.
Each screen: H. 161.0 cm. (63½ in.); W. 351.2 cm. (138¼ in.)

This pair of six-fold screens formerly was in the Kuroda family collection. The mountains and rocks are depicted with layers of soft, undulating ink strokes, some dark, others light. This technique is quite different from Sesshū's usual style. Another notable feature is the use of a low foreground which rises into the distance. The gradual and continuous movement differs from the more abrupt transitions into space found in other paintings by Sesshū. There are slight touches of color. Small Chinese-robed figures wander through the idealized landscapes.



Flowers and Birds 53.94 and 53.95
Sesshū, 1420-1506; ink and color on paper
Muromachi Suibokų school, Ashikaga period, 15th c.
Each screen: H. 161.9 cm. (63¾ in.); W. 359.5 cm. (11 ft. 9½ in.)

During his trip to China, from 1467 to 1469, Sesshū was able to meet and study the works of contemporary Chinese artists. The influence of his visit is apparent in his bird, flower and landscape paintings. Stylistic similarities in screen paintings believed to be by Sesshū depicting birds and flowers suggest that they all were painted when the artist was in his 70's. This pair of six-fold screens representing birds and flowers of the four seasons is painted in a realistic manner, combining black and white with areas of color. The right screen depicts spring and summer, which Sesshū has symbolized by two pheasants on a lush riverbank. The left screen, depicting autumn and winter, has geese and egrets dramatically juxtoposed with gnarled pine and plum trees. The simplicity of the snow-covered mountains contrasts with the detailed treatment of birds and flowers in the foreground.

Orchids and Rock 67.10
Gyokuen Bompō, 1344-ca. 1420; ink on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school, Ashikaga period, 15th c.
H. 84.4 cm. (33¼ in.); W. 35.5 cm. (14 in.)

Gyokuen Bompō is famous both as a Zen monk and as a painter. He lived first in Kamakura, and then served as head priest in several Zen temples before becoming head of Nanzenji, the great Zen temple complex in Kyoto. Bompō specialized in painting orchids in monochrome ink. He was influenced by the work of Hsüeh-ch'uang, a Chinese artist who worked during the Yüan dynasty. The basically calligraphic treatment of every element of the composition characterizes both Chinese and Japanese painting of this tradition.

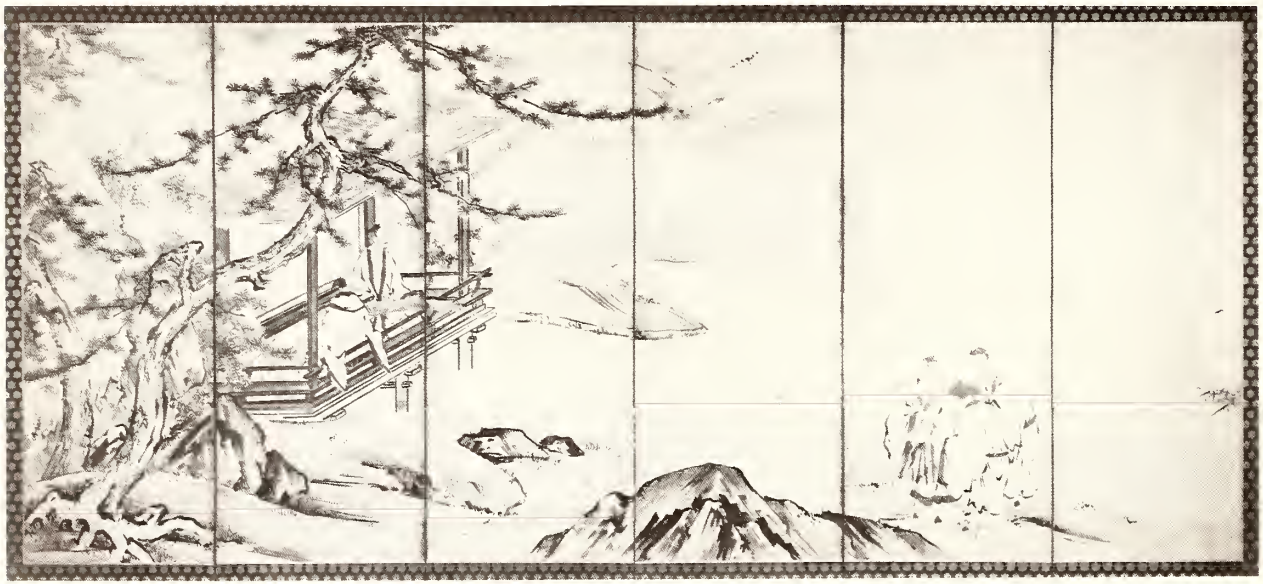
Landscape 05.268
Gakuō, fl. 1500; ink and light color on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school, Ashikaga period, early 16th c.
H. 80.7 cm. (31¾ in.); W. 35.0 cm. (13¾ in.)

Gakuō was a Zen priest whose paintings were influenced by the ink technique of the *suiboku* master Shūbun. The highly stylized treatment of the mountains as bits of crumpled paper is characteristic of his work. The towering composition, based ultimately on landscapes of the Che school in China, here is handled with a somewhat paradoxical interest in moist, enveloping atmosphere and abstract light and dark patterns.

Landscape 66.3
Sesson, ca. 1504-ca. 1589
Six-fold screen; ink and light color on paper
Muromachi Suiboku school; Ashikaga period, 16th c.
H. 153.3 cm. (5 ft. ⅜ in.); W. 329.6 cm. (10 ft. 9¾ in.)

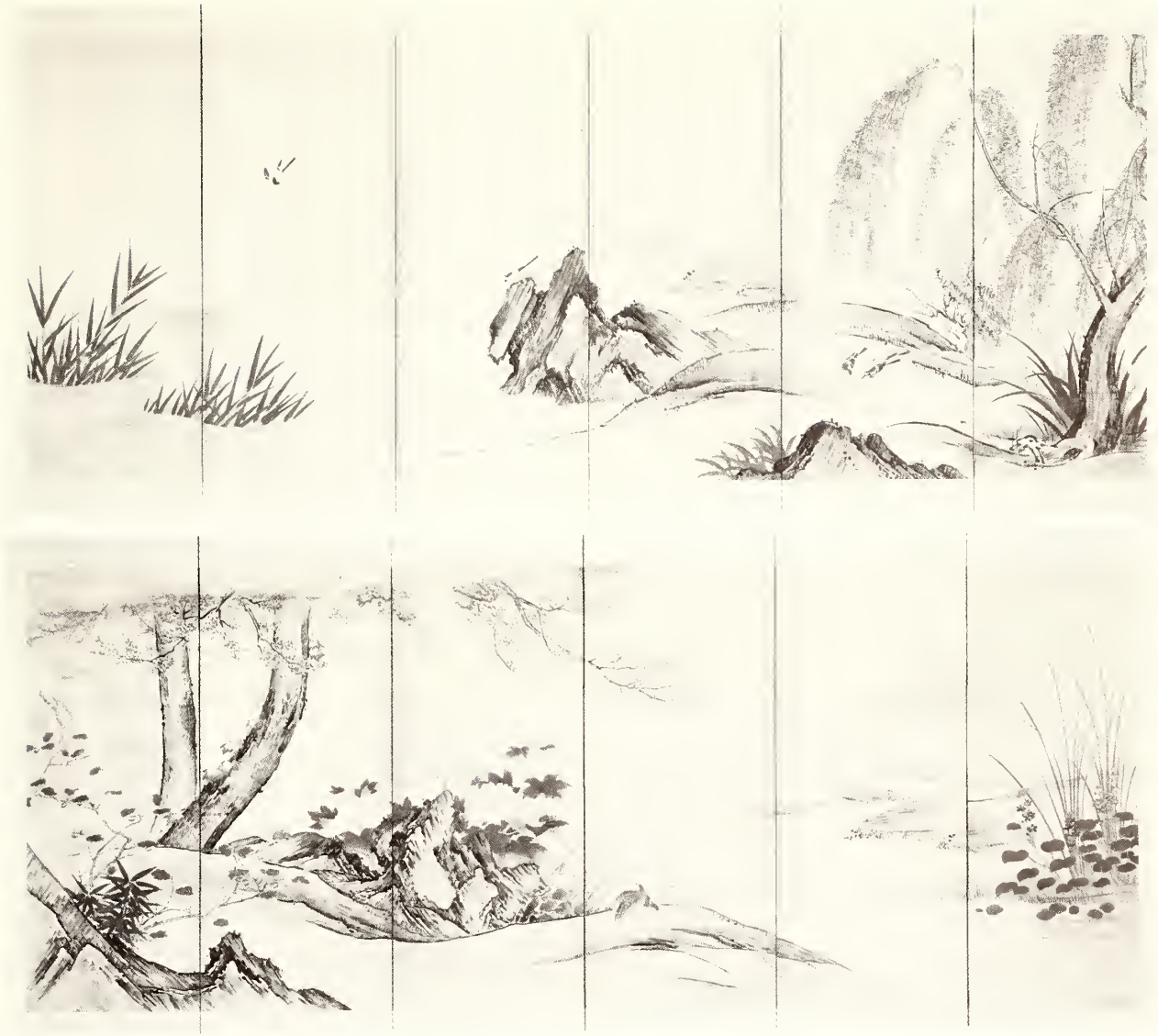
One of a pair of screens representing the four seasons, this screen depicts autumn and winter. The bleak, wind-whipped landscapes are characteristic of the frenetic quality found in Sesson's paintings. Although Sesson thought of himself as a follower of the great master Sesshū, he lived out his entire life in the provinces, far from the art centers in the capital. Sesson's extremely individualistic painting style may be explained partially by his separation from the capital and partially by his having been self-taught. One unusual feature of these landscapes is the artist's use of white pigment to indicate snow. The brushwork and composition suggest that the painting dates from the early years of Sesson's career. There are no seals or signature.

(Detail)



The Four Accomplishments 63.12 and 63.13
Kanō Eitoku, 1543-90; ink on paper
Kanō school, Momoyama period, 16th c.
Each screen: H. 154.0 cm. (60⅝ in.); W. 354.0 cm. (11 ft. 7⅜ in.)

Working under the indulgent patronage of the warlords, Nobunaga (1534-82) and Hideyoshi (1536-98), Eitoku undertook vast decoration projects in the great feudal castles of the Momoyama period. His bold, spectacular designs bespeak the unusual splendor that characterized the art of the period. The Four Accomplishments—chess, calligraphy, painting and psaltry—originally were cultivated by Chinese literati. In this pair of six-fold screens, the figures wear Chinese costumes and are depicted in monochrome ink. Eitoku's brushwork, broader and more patterned than Chinese prototypes, establishes rocks, trees and figures with a fundamental concern for abstract tonal patterns. There is little indication of depth as the scholars pursue their activities within a shallow foreground space.



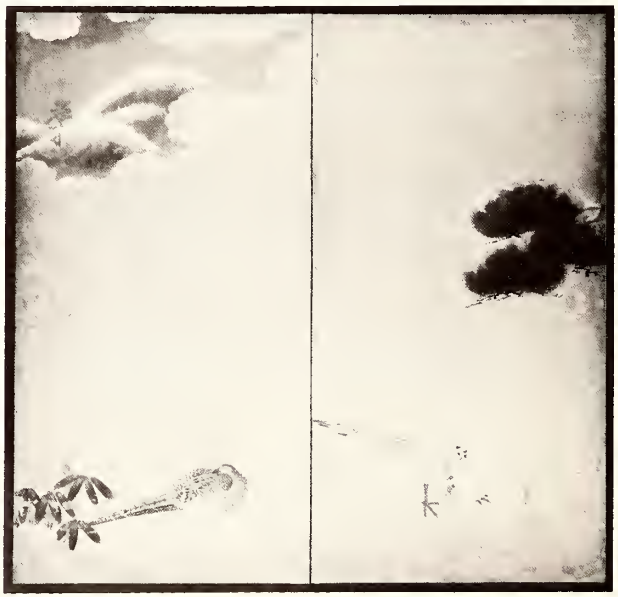
Birds in a Landscape 56.17 and 56.18
Attributed to Kanō Sanraku, 1559-1635
Ink and color on paper
Kanō school, Momoyama period, late 16th-early 17th c.
Each screen: H. 139.4 cm. (54⅞ in.); W. 356.8 cm. (11 ft. 8½ in.)

Sanraku was born into a military class family in Ōmi, and lived most of his life in Kyoto. As a youth he served as a page in the court of the great warlord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98). According to tradition, it was Hideyoshi himself who noted Sanraku's artistic ability and had him apprenticed to Kanō Eitoku (1543-90). The youth was adopted by Eitoku and continued to serve as decorator under Hideyoshi after Eitoku's death. Sanraku was a brilliant craftsman, working in a wide range of techniques and styles. In this pair of six-fold screens attributed to him, he organized the composition on a series of undulating lines. Pines and willows flanking either end of the screens stabilize the movement, yet complement the rough-hewn rocks and precise birds and flowers.

Birds in Landscape 62.10, 62.11 and 62.12
Hasegawa Tōnin, early 17th c.
Ink, color and gold leaf on paper
Unkoku school, Edo period, 17th c.
Each screen: H. 160.5 cm. (63¼ in.); W. 168.0 cm. (66⅛ in.)

In 1628 fire swept through Akashi Castle in Hyōgo prefecture. Among the objects rescued from the conflagration were twelve paintings which had been mounted on *fusuma*. These paintings were subsequently remounted in pairs to form six two-fold screens; three of these screens are now in the Freer collection. Repaired areas on the edge of each panel cover the scars of the original door pulls.

Information about the artist, Hasegawa Tōnin, is meagre. An inscription on the back of one of the screens states that the paintings were executed around 1617. The compositions present a continuous panorama of brightly plumaged birds in seasonal landscapes. The appearance of pine, bamboo and plum, harbingers of spring, suggests that the panels originally were part of a large design with literary allusions.



Tale of Genji 32.27
Tosa Mitsunori, 1583-1638; ink and gold on paper
Tosa school, Edo period, 17th c.
H. 13.7 cm. (5⅜ in.); W. 15.0 cm. (5⅞ in.)

Lady Murasaki's romantic novel, *Tale of Genji*, describing court life during the Heian period, provides a perennial theme for Japanese artists. In this album there are thirty illustrations by Tosa Mitsunori. Accompanying the painting are thirty poems, written by an anonymous calligrapher. The calligraphy is written on paper decorated with *sumi* marbling and square flecks of gold leaf. The poem selected for reproduction is from Chapter XX, Asagao, or "Morning Glory." Genji has been making his peace with Murasaki as a result of rumors she had heard regarding his relationship with Princess Asagao. Genji and Murasaki were looking out on the winter night noting the beauty of the full moonlight on the snow-covered garden and frozen stream after the storm, when Murasaki recited the poem. Evidently it is a comparison of the beauty of the garden after the winter storm and the state of the couple's affection after their quarrel.

"The water between the icebound stones is at rest, and yet the rays of the moon which lighten the sky flow on."

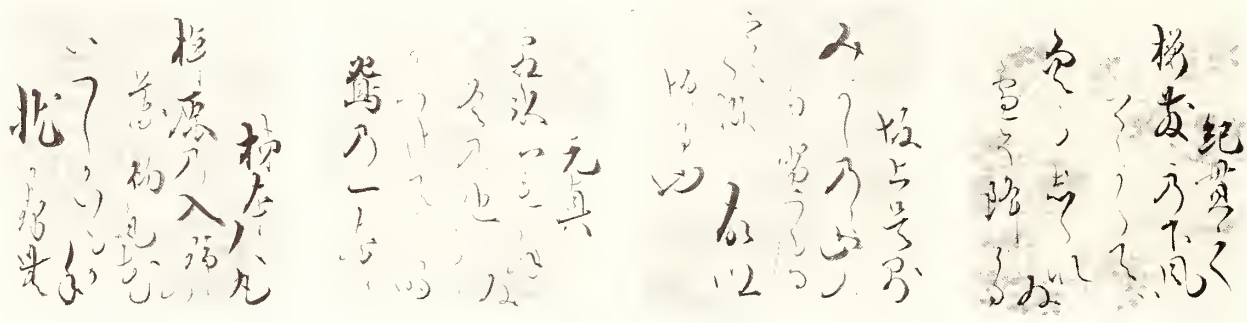
The paintings are drawn in unusually fine outline, with an occasional touch of light red color in the lips. Clouds are painted with gold gouache, while decoration on furniture is done with small flecks of *kirikane*. This painting is from Chapter XVI, Sekiya, "The Barrier House," illustrating the meeting of Genji's caravan with that of Utsusemi and her husband Iyo no Suke at the Osaka Barrier near Ōtsu, on Lake Biwa, in the Kyoto region. Genji's bullock cart passes through the foreground. In the background, almost hidden by the trees, are the carts of Utsusemi and her husband. A black seal reading "Tosa Mitsunori" is affixed on the back of each painting.

A large part of Mitsunori's life was spent in Sakai in Izumi province, where he studied Tosa school techniques with Mitsuyoshi (1539-1613). Later Mitsunori moved to the capital where he supplied the court with monthly and yearly ceremonial fans.

(Detail)

Poems on stamped paper 03.309
Kōetsu (1558-1637) and Sōtatsu (17th c.)
Rimpa school, Momoyama-Edo period
H. 33.0 cm. (13 in.); W. 994.2 cm. (32 ft. 7⅜ in.)

Hon'ami Kōetsu and Nonomura Sōtatsu often collaborated in producing scrolls and paintings; there is a possibility that they also were related by marriage. These poems, inscribed by Kōetsu on eleven sheets of paper decorated by Sōtatsu with designs stamped in gold and silver, unexpectedly were found on the backs of four Sōtatsu attributed panels in the Freer collection. The pattern of cranes and bamboo, as well as the calligraphy, are similar to other elegant examples by the two artists.



Poems of the Thirty-six Poets 75.20
Hon'ami Kōetsu, 1558-1637
Ink on gold painted paper
Average size of each of the 36 leaves: H. 12.0 cm. (4¾ in.); W. 10.7 cm. (4¼ in.)

Since Heian times, Kyoto has remained the center of traditional Japanese culture. It was in Kyoto that Kōetsu fostered one of Japan's most native artistic movements, a spiritual renaissance of the glorious past. The appeal of that movement was to the aristocracy, and aesthetically it embodied the indigenous Japanese achievements in art. Kōetsu, a master in calligraphy, lacquer and pottery, expressed these new ideals throughout his prolific life. His calligraphy, modelled after masters of the ninth and tenth centuries, revolutionized contemporary artistic traditions, and he was recognized as one of the three great scribes of the day. Kōetsu often added his calligraphy to scrolls of Sotatsu's stamped designs. In the present album Kōetsu transcribed the ancient poems of the master poets, which as well as anything, epitomized the classical Heian period.

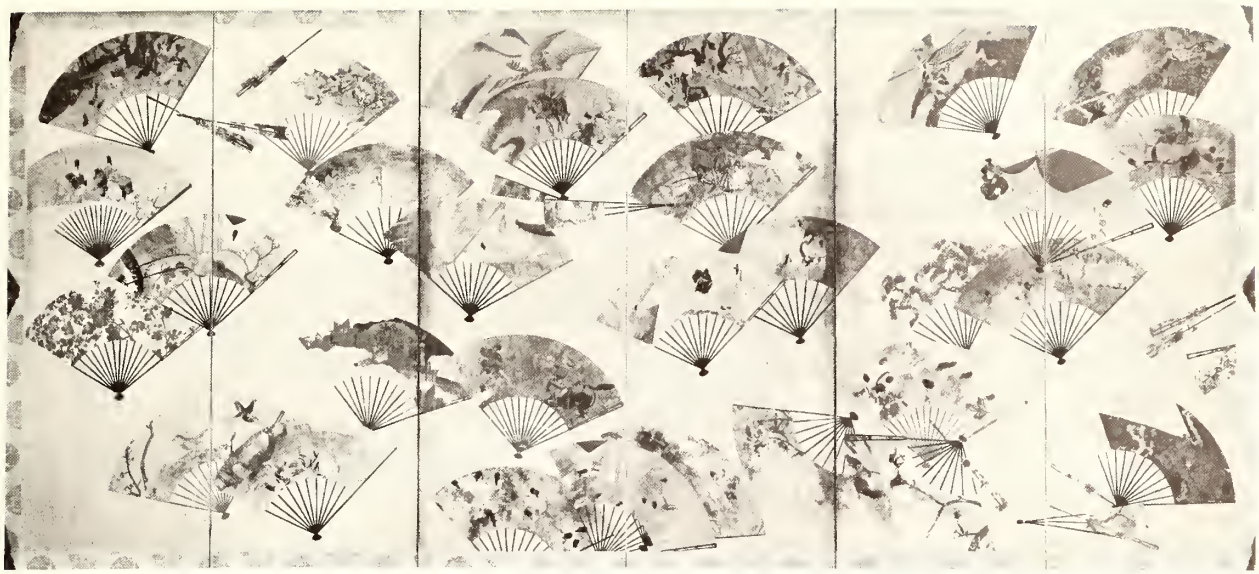
Waves at Matsushima 06.231 and 06.232
Nonomura Sōtatsu; ink, color and gold on paper
Rimpa school, Momoyama-Edo period, 17th c.
Each screen: H. 152.0 cm. (59⅞ in.); W. 355.7 cm. (11 ft. 8 in.)

Little is known of Sōtatsu's early life, and the circumstances of his training remain obscure. Apparently he belonged to the merchant class and worked closely with the well-known artist, Kōetsu (1558-1637). Sōtatsu sought inspiration in the secular and popular painting styles of earlier periods. These two screens, formerly in the collection of the Shōun-ji temple at Sakai, reveal the vigor of Sōtatsu's mature style. White-capped waves surge relentlessly through the composition in a turbulently rhythmic pattern.. Even the rocky islets and silver-bordered sandbank seem to be caught up in the undulating motion. Only the long horizontal clouds at the top of the composition offer some calm to the seascape. Traditionally the screens are said to represent a view of Matsushima, a spot in northern Japan famous for pine-covered islands. Recently it has been suggested that Sōtatsu may possibly have been referring to an episode in the Ise-monogatari which describes the tossing waves in the Bay of Ise.

Trees 62.30 and 62.31
Nonomura Sōtatsu; ink and color on gold leaf
Rimpa school, Momoyama-Edo period, 17th c.
Each screen: H. 154.0 cm. (60⅝ in.); W. 357.8 cm. (11 ft. 9 in.)

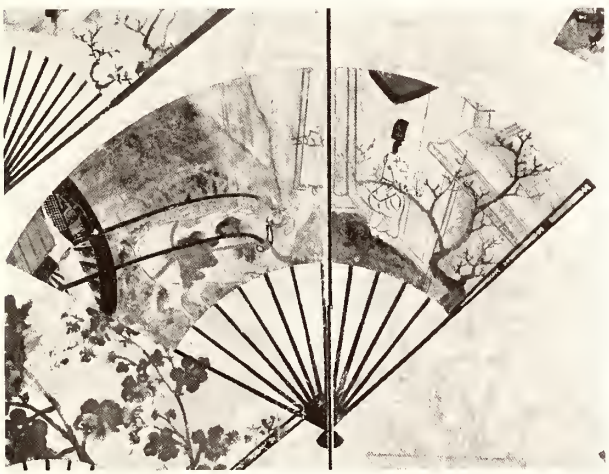
The only information available about Sōtatsu's life points to his having been the son of a wealthy merchant. Sōtatsu exemplifies the change which had occurred in the Japanese economic structure during the early seventeenth century, for though he was descended from the merchant class, he rose to a position of prominence and received the honorary title of Hokkyō.

Japanese artists traditionally place their seals on the outer edges of screens. If this practice is followed, the composition of these two six-fold screens shows a thicket of trees covering all six panels on the right screen, while only three of the six panels on the left screen are painted. The juxtaposition of three undecorated gold leaf panels on the left and the dense semi-silhouetted trees on the right is a bold and daring design. Only the tops of the trees are shown, rendered in a rich variety of opaque malachite pigment.



Decorated fans 00.24
Nonomura Sōtatsu; ink, color, gold and silver on gold
Rimpa school, Momoyama-Edo period, 17th c.
H. 154.4 cm. (60-13/16 in.); W. 362.7 cm. (11 ft. 10¾ in.)

Thirty decorated fans are mounted on the gold ground of the six-fold screen, together with a number of smaller paintings representing closed or partially opened fans. Nine of the fan mounts depict flowers, trees and birds, while one represents a tortoise. The remaining twenty fans are of a type developed by Sōtatsu and continued by his followers. Mounted warriors and retainers engaged in animated fighting reflect the Yamato-e style of the Kamakura period and probably are related to now-lost handscrolls illustrating the fierce battles of the Hōgen Insurrection in the mid-twelfth century. Sōtatsu may have based his designs on fragments of Kamakura handscrolls that were still extant in the seventeenth century. These fan paintings are of great importance for the reconstruction of lost Kamakura works.



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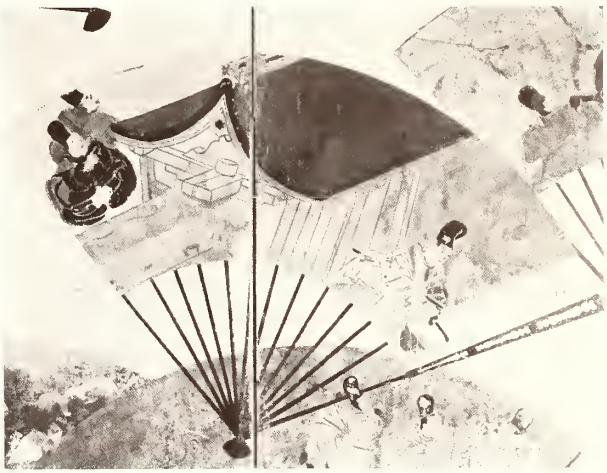


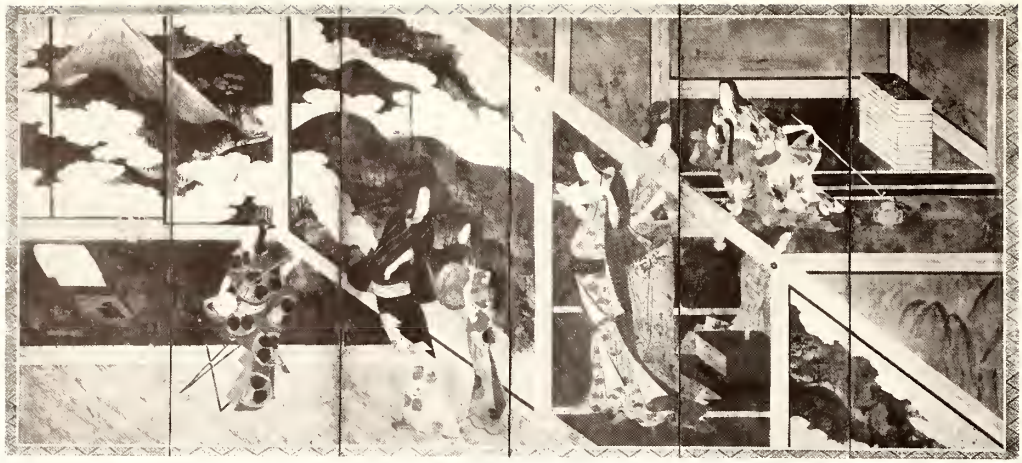
(Detail)

Coxcombs, maize and morning-glories 01.99 and 03.142
Colors, gold and silver on paper
Rimpa school, Momoyama period
H. 144.2 cm. (56¾ in.); W. 174.5 cm. (68-11/16 in.) H. 139.0 cm. (54¾ in.); W. 160.0 cm. (63 in.)

Artists of the Rimpa school based their work on the styles of such late Momoyama and early Edo period artists as Hon'ami Kōetsu, Nonomura Sōtatsu, Ogata Kōrin and his brother Ogata Kenzan. Bold designs with astonishingly capable technical craftsmanship are typical of the paintings produced by artists of the school. These two-fold screens depicting coxcombs, maize and morning-glories are fine examples of the decorative Rimpa tradition. The dark gray background of one screen and the lower portion of the other are covered with oxidized silver leaf. The use of silver leaf as a ground was common during the late seventeenth century. Maize probably was introduced into the composition as a novelty, for the plant is not native to Japan and must have been brought to the country in the cargoes of foreign merchants.

Foreigners 65.22 and 65.23
Ink, color and gold on gold-leafed paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 17th c.
Each screen: H. 152.0 cm. (59⅞ in.); W. 331.0 cm. (10 ft. 11 in.)

The arrival of Jesuit missionaries and Western merchants during the sixteenth century gave Ukiyo-e artists a new source of subject matter. Since the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch came to Japan from the South, this type of painting is referred to as Namban or "Southern Barbarian." This pair of six-panel screens depicts the arrival of a foreign ship with Portuguese sailors and merchants elegantly clad in brightly patterned full pantaloons and broad-brimmed hats. Their large noses and slightly grotesque features are typical of early Japanese representations of foreigners. The Portuguese captain, together with Catholic priests, promenade past curious Japanese shopkeepers and two Chinese courtesans on their way to a small chapel in the upper right corner of the second screen. An image of Christ within the chapel is one of the earliest Christian paintings done in Japan.



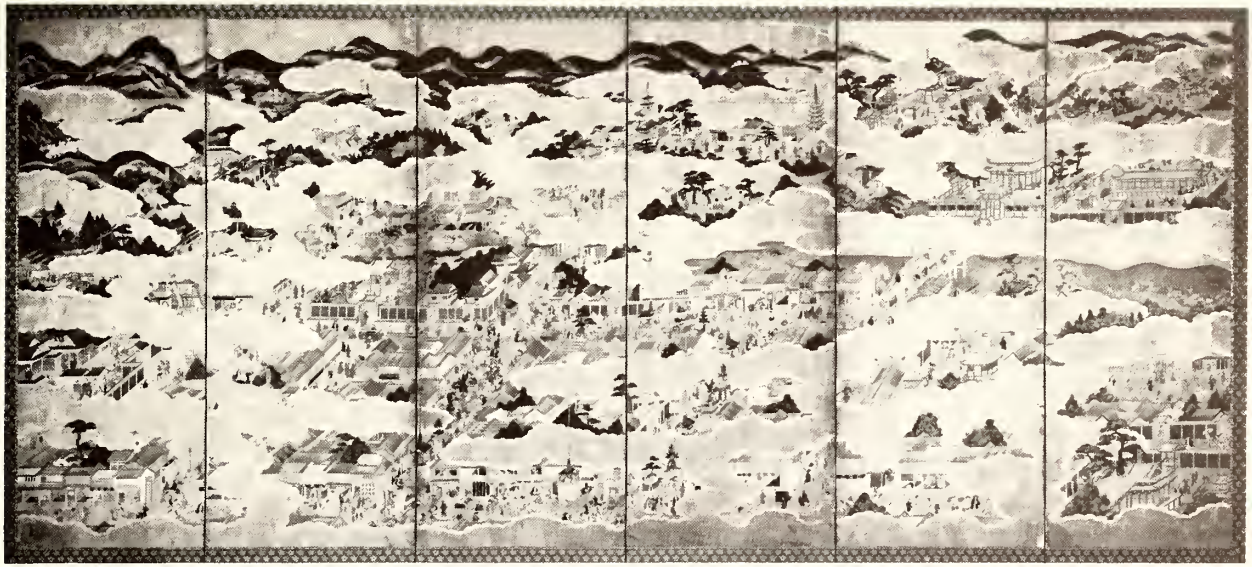
Courtesans 01.173
Ink, color and gold on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Momoyama period, late 16th-early 17th c.
H. 150.0 cm. (59-1/16 in.); W. 350.0 cm. (11 ft. 5¾ in.)

This six-fold screen is one of the most important surviving monuments of early Ukiyo-e tradition to depict an interior. The courtesans are unusually large in scale; their flowing hair is arranged in a style that was popular in Kyoto during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Their pliant stance, with protruding waists and low *obi*, is similar to that of the noted *Bath-house Girls* painting in the Atami Museum. The artist's concern for bold textile patterns is a typical feature of the Ukiyo-e tradition. Landscape details on the sliding panels within the interior reveal both Kanō and Tosa school influence.

Kamo Horse Race 66.35
Ink, color and gold on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 17th c.
H. 76.8 cm. (30¼ in.); W. 516.0 cm. (16 ft. 11⅛ in.)

A horse race is held annually in May at the Kamikamo Shrine, in Kyoto. Although the foundations of the temple date at least as early as the sixth century, the horse races have their origin in later contests of military prowess held at the shrine. In this unusual ten-fold screen, the artist has depicted the race course bounded on either side by spectators. While the contestants urge their horses forward, the spectators amuse themselves by gossiping, eating, sleeping and only incidentally watching the race. A group of Portuguese in brightly-patterned costumes lend exotic detail. The brilliantly-colored landscape elements are based on Yamato-e traditions.

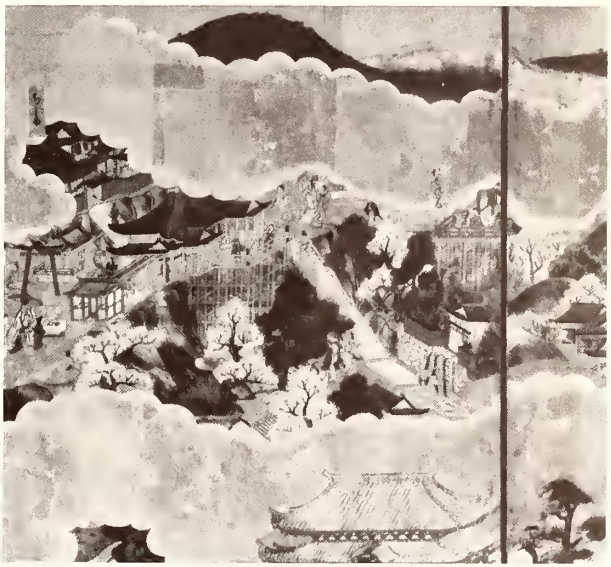
(Detail)



Scenes in and around Kyoto 59.8
Ink, color and gold on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, early mid-17th c.
H. 150.5 cm. (59¼ in.); W. 348.0 cm. (11 ft. 5 in.)

Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, continued to be regarded as the center of classical tradition even after the establishment of a new capital at Edo. This six-fold screen, evidently one of a pair, depicts famous sites in the eastern section of the city. The lost screen, no doubt, presented a vista of the western section. Screens of this type were commonly called *Rakuchū Rakugai*. Beneath brilliant green hills, golden clouds enframe such famous religious monuments as the Sanjūsan gendō and Kiyomizudera. The colorful panorama of the Gion Festival procession, with towering wheeled carts proceeding through the streets, unfolds in the central section of the screen. Festivals and ceremonies of all seasons are combined on the screen.

(Detail)



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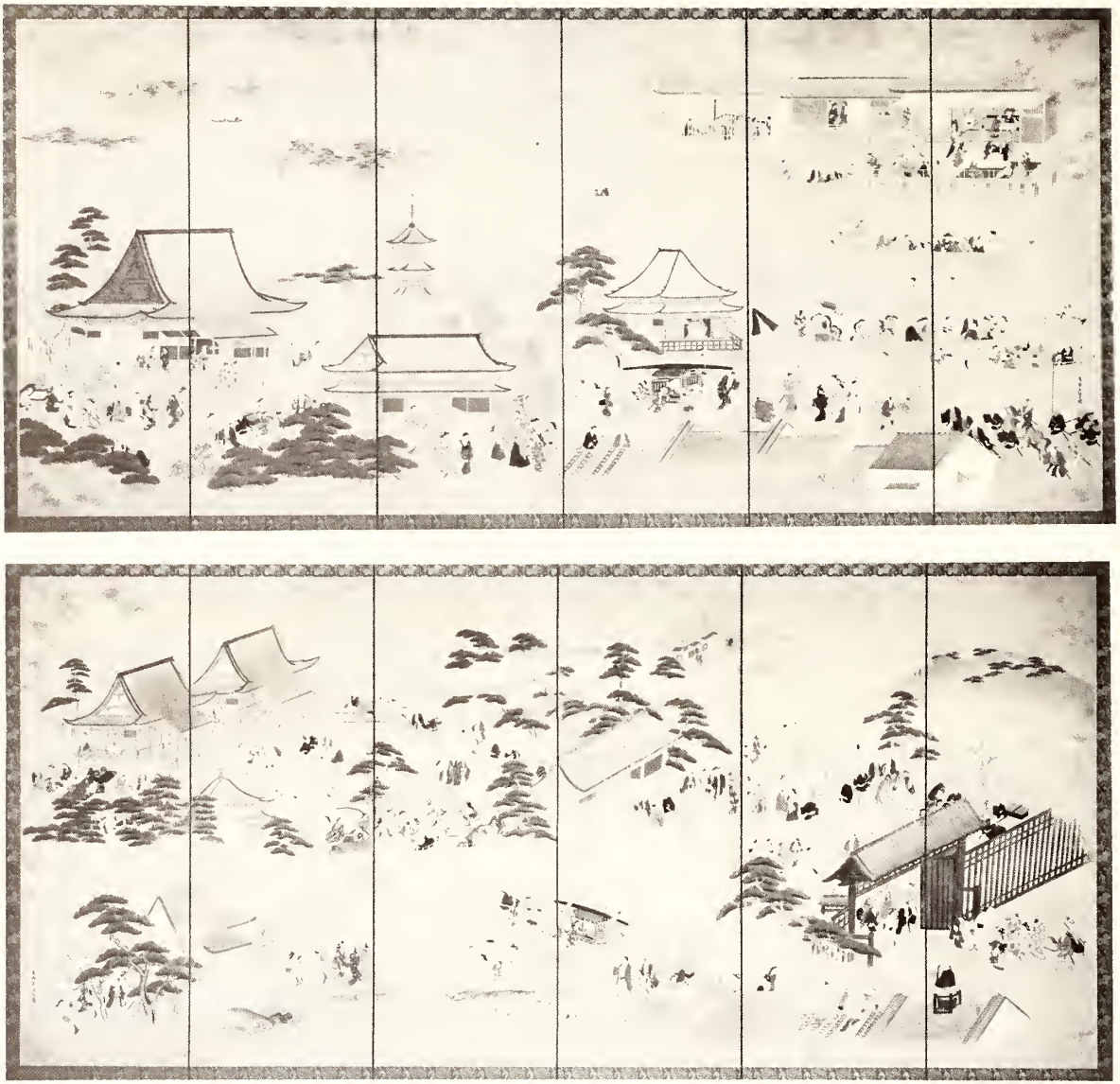


Autumn at Asakusa Temple and *Cherry Blossoms at Ueno Park* 06.266 and 06.267
Hishikawa Moronobu, c. 1618-94
Ink, color and gold powder on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 17th c.
Each screen: H. 165.6 cm. (65-3/16 in.); W. 367.9 cm. (12 ft. 7/8 in.)

Moronobu is usually regarded as one of the earliest innovators of the Ukiyo-e school. The bustling life of the Yoshiwara section and the brilliant panorama of the theatre served as subject matter for his work. In his paintings, as in his prints, Moronobu reveals a concern for anecdotal detail and those subtle nuances or gestures that bespeak careful observations of life about him. His father was an embroiderer and the young boy must have acquired much of his early training as a draftsman while drawing textile designs. In these screens depicting Japanese sightseers visiting two of Edo's most famous seasonal attractions, the rich variety of textile designs probably reflects Moronobu's early training. People from all walks of life move through the colorful landscapes now with the same animation they did some three hundred years ago.

(Detail)

Festivals of the Twelve Months 59.12
Miyagawa Chōshun, 1682-1752
Ink, color and silver on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period
H. 31.3 cm. (12⅜ in.); W. 1442.4 cm. (47 ft. 3⅞ in.)

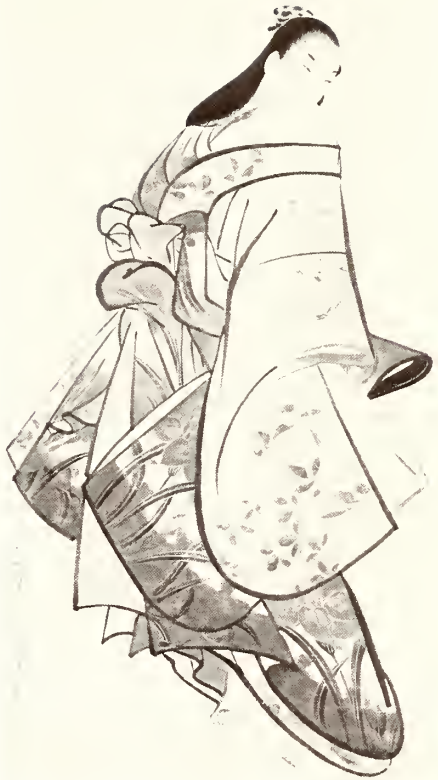
Although Chōshun's early training was in the Tosa tradition, he became an Ukiyo-e artist and was particularly influenced by Hishikawa Moronobu (c. 1618-94). It was as a colorist that Chōshun achieved his greatest fame, as is attested by the subtle harmonies in this handscroll depicting the *Festivals of the Twelve Months*. In this detail symbolic of the ninth month, people of various ages are languidly seated on a verandah and in the rooms of a simple house in an idealistic setting. Happiness prevails throughout this utopian world. Careful attention to the textile designs is a characteristic feature of Ukiyo-e painting, and the concern for realism and true perspective evidence the growth of Western influence.

A Puppet Show 98.505
Bunkaku, fl. first half of 18th c.
Ink, color and gold on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 18th c.
H. 138.3 cm. (54-7/16 in.); W. 363.0 cm. (11 ft. 10⅞ in.)

The artist's name, given in the inscription on the right edge of the painting, cannot be traced; however, the style of the painting and some details of the composition suggest that the name Bunkaku probably is connected with Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764). The plot of the play being enacted deals with Tsuneo, a loyal knight who was banished from court on false charges. Tsuneo and his wife were living in utter poverty when a Buddhist monk stopped at their home on a stormy winter afternoon. Ashamed of their humble circumstances, they were at first reluctant to admit the monk, but finally allowed him to stay. During the course of the night Tsuneo told the monk of his unjust disgrace. The cold finally forced Tsuneo to sacrifice his three prized potted trees to warm the house. Not long after the monk departed, Tsuneo was summoned to the Shōgun's court at Kamakura. There he saw that the monk actually was the powerful *Shikken* (Prime Minister) Hōjō Tokiyori (1227-63). Tsuneo's property and rank were restored to him, together with three additional estates to reimburse him for the sacrifice of his three precious trees.

A Courtesan 66.2
Kaigetsudō Ando, fl. early 18th c.
Ink and color on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 18th c.
H. 98.1 cm. (35⅝ in.); W. 45.1 cm. (17¾ in.)

Kaigetsudō Ando was one of the most important artists who worked during those years when the Ukiyo-e tradition was in its formative stage. His paintings of the beauties from the Yoshiwara at Edo, swathed in magnificently decorated kimono, have a monumental beauty. The artist juxtaposes a variety of bold textile patterns, each one outlined in black, against a plain background. Only the courtesan's face and foot emerge provocatively from the kimono to reveal her fragile beauty. The artist's signature and seal appear at the lower left corner of the painting.



A scene from a kabuki play 98.14
Torii Kiyonobu I, 1664-1729
Ink, colors and gold on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period
H. 41.0 cm. (16⅛ in.); W. 52.6 cm .(20-11/16 in.)

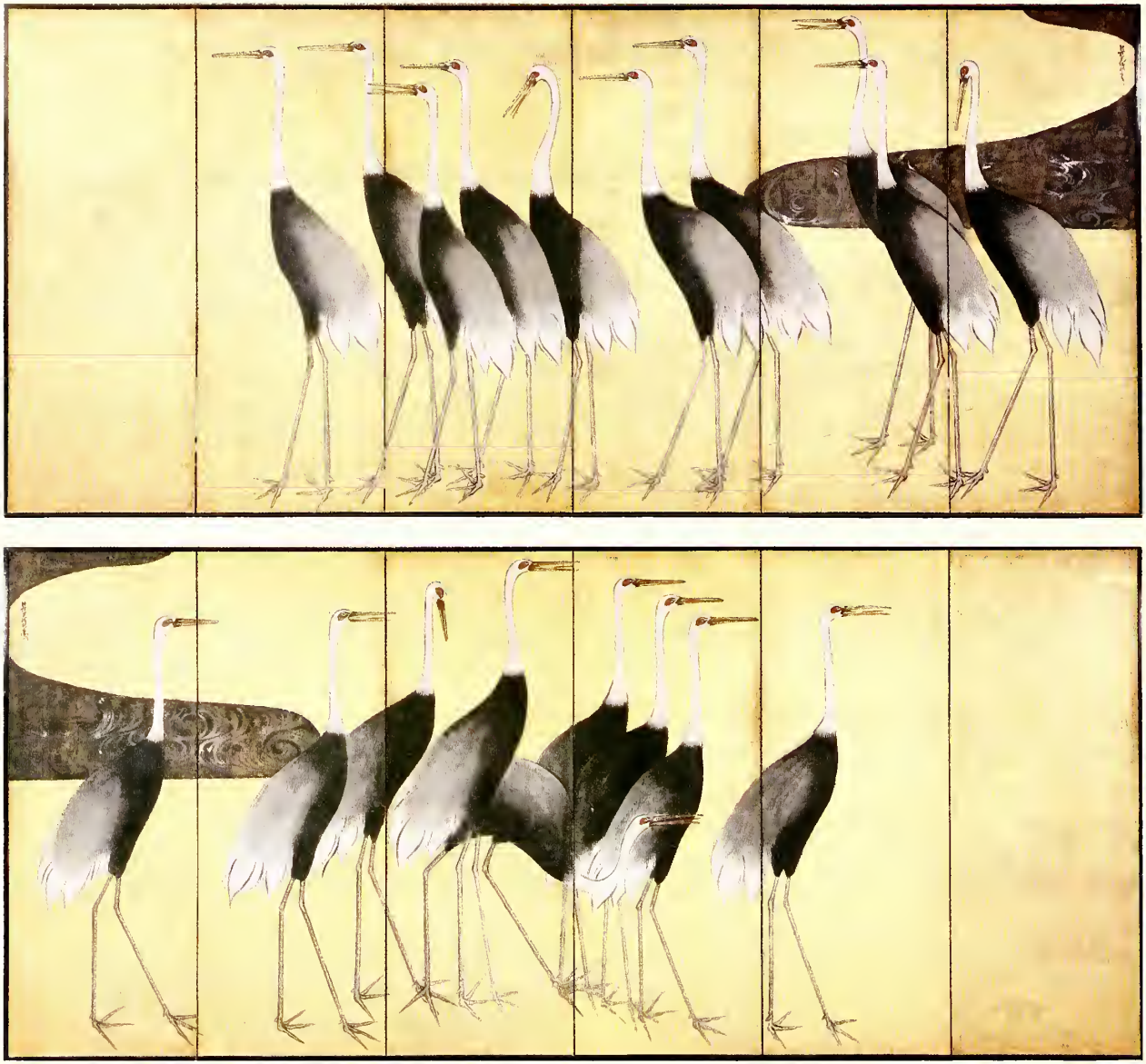
A play entitled *Bandō-ichi Kotobuki Soga* was first performed in February of 1715 in Edo, modern day Tokyo. The plot recounts the revenge of the Soga brothers for the murder of their father. Kiyonobu has captured a climax of this play when the hero is about to enact his vendetta. Ichikawa Danjurō II, who is shown playing the part of Soga no Gorō, has just smashed a cutting board and is threatening his uncle. The *mon* or crests upon the robes enable one to identify the actors and characters. A note dated 1799, originally mounted on the back of the painting, records the date of the first performance of this play and gives the names of the actors. From the earliest days, theatrical subjects were prominent in Ukiyo-e painting, and artists of the Torii school specialized in representing the kabuki theater.

Door panels 03.103 and 03.104
Ogata Kōrin, 1658-1716; ink and color on wood
Rimpa school, Edo period, 17th-18th c.
H. 159.2 cm. (62-11/16 in.); W. 81.0 cm. (31⅞ in.)

Kōrin was one of the most prolific and versatile of Japanese artists. Although he worked in many different media, he succeeded in making noteworthy innovations in each. The two wooden *fusuma* (sliding panels) are painted on both sides, the two compositions being complete on either side. One side of the panels depicts the ninth-century poet, Ariwara no Narihira, mounted on a black horse, with the great cone of Mount Fuji in the background. The mountain is painted in silver and granular blue pigment darkened with ink. Narihira looks up at the peak. Three white-robed attendants follow behind, while another attendant wearing a purple coat stands alone on the opposite panel. The romantic exploits of Narihira are said to have formed the subject of the classical story Ise-monogatari. The other side depicts a plum tree and moon.

Narihira and the Pilgrim 03.1
Ogata Kōrin, 1658-1716; ink, color and gold on gesso
Rimpa school, Edo period, 17th-18th c.
H. 35.6 cm. (14 in.); W. 22.7 cm. (8-15/16 in.)

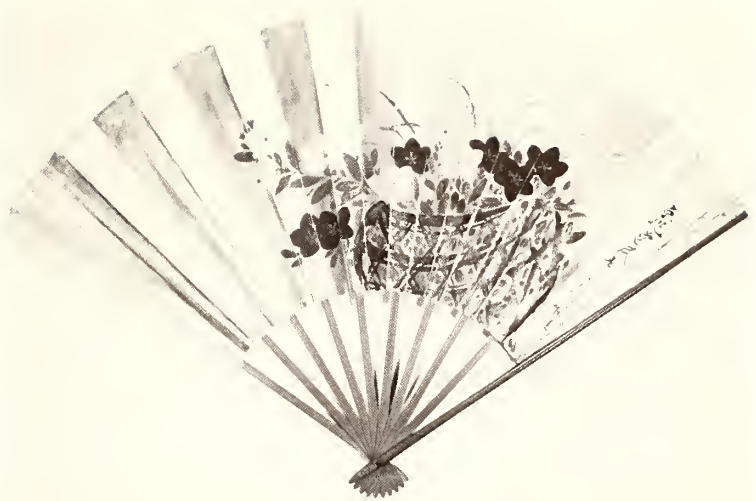
Whether he was designing large screens or a small fan, Kōrin organized the elements of his composition with daring ingenuity. Here he has separated the individual figures by free-form shapes suggesting a winding path on the slopes of Mount Utsu. The fan painting illustrates Chapter IX of the Tale of Ise. The poet Ariwara no Narihira and his companions arrive at Mount Utsu and meet a mendicant monk. Since Ariwara intended to send a message to his beloved in the capital, he wrote a letter and entrusted it to the priest. The painting of chrysanthemums by water on the reverse is signed by Kōrin.



Cranes 56.20 and 56.21
Ogata Kōrin, 1658-1716; ink, color and gold on paper
Rimpa school, Edo period, 17th-18th c.
Each screen: H. 166.0 cm. (65⅜ in.); W. 371.0 cm. (12 ft. 2 in.)

Nineteen stylized cranes move solemnly across both six-fold screens in cautious cadence. Kōrin arranged the composition with emphasis on the patterns formed by the severely formalized cranes. The brilliant gold ground, interrupted only at either edge by the incursion of swirling waves, adds to the sumptuousness of the design. Kōrin's bold, decorative screens epitomize the luxurious taste of the wealthy merchant class during the Edo period.

Painted fan 11.318
Ogata Kenzan, 1663-1743; ink and color on gold
Rimpa school, Edo period, 17th-18th c.
H. 18.4 cm. (7¼ in.); W. 50.0 cm. (19-11/16 in.)



Kenzan is especially noted for his ceramics decorated with characteristically asymmetrical bold designs. His paintings reveal a similar spontaneity and inventiveness. On the face of this small folding fan Kenzan placed a basket of flowers obliquely in one corner, with individual floral sprays curving out onto the gold ground. The poem written on the reverse of the fan is identical with that on a painting of flower baskets in the Matsunaga collection.

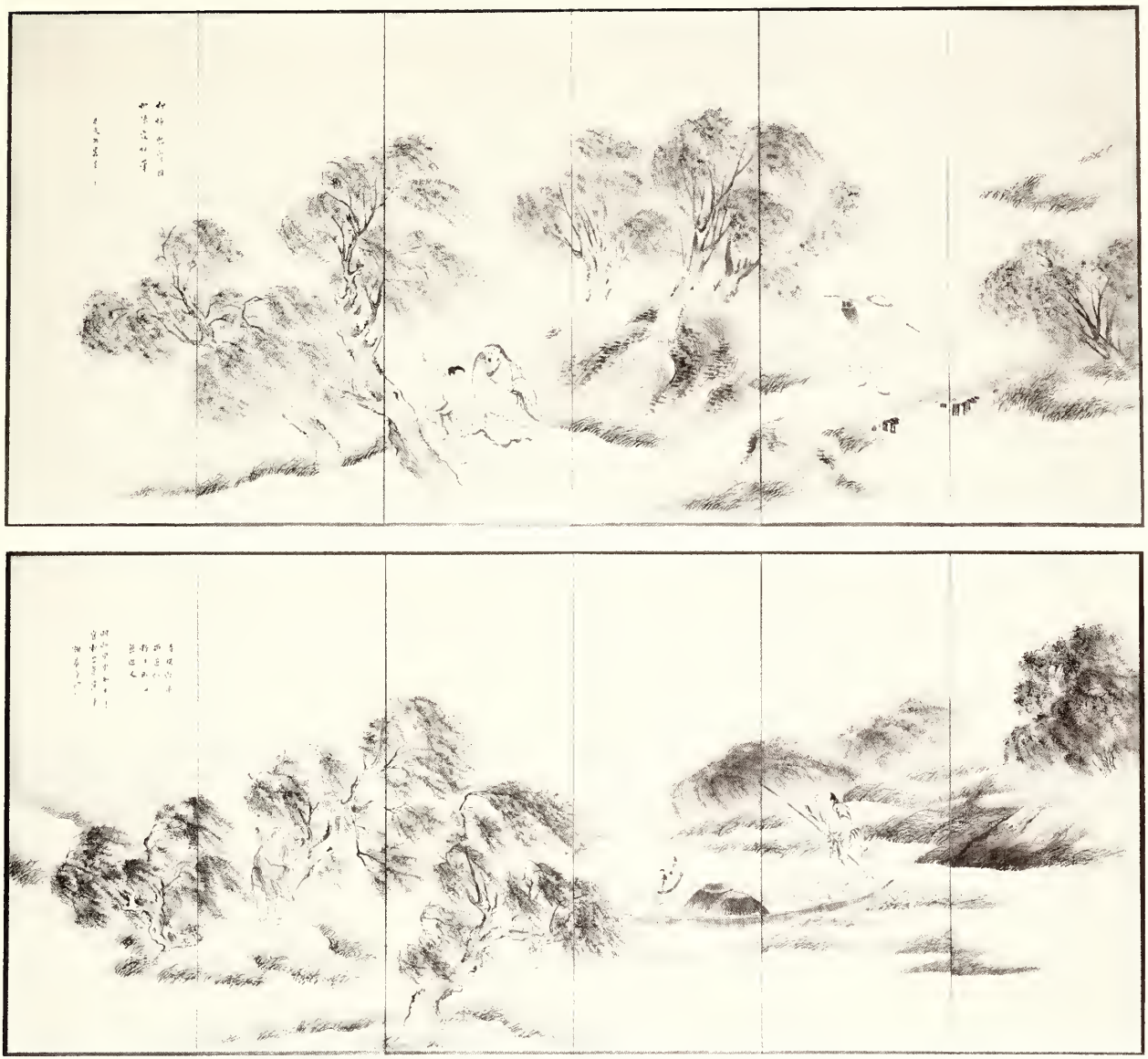
One Hundred Old Men Gathering for a Drinking Party 60.22 (detail)
Ikeno Taiga, 1723-76; ink, color and gold on silk
Nanga school, Edo period, 18th c.
H. 53.8 cm. (21-3/16 in.); W. 292.3 cm. (9 ft. 7 in.)

Among artists of the Nanga school, Chinese literati painting, or *bunjinga*, to use the Japanese term, became increasingly more important during the eighteenth century. Ikeno Taiga was one of the most outstanding artists working in this tradition. Born and raised in Kyoto, Taiga was an excellent calligrapher and student of Zen Buddhism. He knew many of the painters and poets of the day; and was an avid sightseer, visiting the famous mountain retreats throughout Japan.

Taiga's work is said to have been influenced by Yanagizawa Kien (1706-58) and Gion Nankai (1677-1751), two artists who worked in Chinese style. His wife, Gyokuran (1728-84), also was an artist. In this handscroll depicting one hundred old gentlemen gathering for a drinking party, Taiga's calligraphic brushline races over the silk, suggesting rather than defining landscape, architecture and human figures. A casual, witty and slightly inebriated flavor pervades the handscroll. This handscroll may also be a pun on the traditional Chinese theme of bounty, one hundred children.

Red Cliff and Yüeh-yang Tower 64.11 and 64.12
Ikeno Taiga, 1723-1776; ink and color on paper
Nanga school, Edo period
H. 130.8 cm. (51½ in.); W. 56.8 cm. (22⅜ in.)
H. 130.4 cm. (51⅜ in.); W. 56.8 cm. (22⅜ in.)

Nanga school artists, like their Chinese counterparts, frequently based their paintings on famous works of Chinese literature that describe exotic scenes. A Red Cliff was described by Su Tung-p'o in two famous prose poems written after his two trips to the site in 1082. The Yüeh-yang tower, built during the T'ang dynasty, was immortalized in literature by Fan Chung-yen after its reconstruction in 1045. The towering cliff and oblique lake surface suggest that the scenes are imaginatively rather than realistically conceived. Taiga often introduced slanting planes in his early landscapes; the blue wash outlines on cliffs and rocks, together with the crisp brushwork, are elements found in works of his forties.



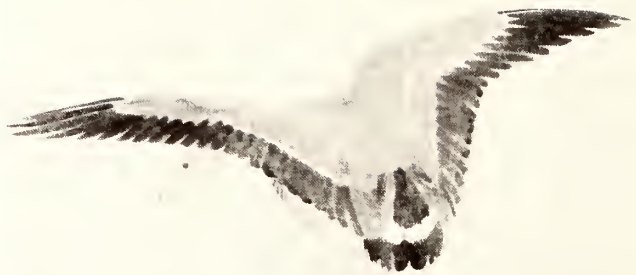
Landscape 61.4 and 61.5
Yosa Buson, 1716-83; ink and color on silk
Nanga school, Edo period, 18th c.
Each screen: H. 166.5 cm. (5 ft. 5½ in.);
W. 371.0 cm. (12 ft. 2½ in.)

Buson, one of Japan's greatest literati painters, was equally famous as a poet. The combination of poetry and painting, a fundamental concept of literati painting, is clearly apparent in this pair of six-fold screens. The theme of the short poem is echoed in the landscape. Diagonal wind-whipped grasses and willows, catching the rays of late afternoon sun, unite the composition. Trees, grasses and rocks, built up with a multitude of small strokes, appear curiously soft. Only the caricature-like scholar seated quietly in his boat returning home from fishing is unruffled by the wind. The inscription is dated in correspondence with 1764, when Buson was 49 years old.

Geese Flying Over a Beach 98.143
Maruyama Ōkyo, 1733-95; ink on paper
Maruyama school, Edo period, 18th c.
H. 154.8 cm. (60-15/16 in.); W. 349.6 cm. (11 ft. 5⅞ in.)

During the eighteenth century, the Japanese had greater contact with China as well as with the West. Consequently, Japanese artists renewed their interest in Ming and Ch'ing dynasty painting and looked in wonderment at the marvels of Western perspective. Ōkyo was an artist well suited to combine these new influences with Japanese tradition. His extraordinary artistic output and great technical mastery clearly record his continuing interest in direct observation of nature.

These paintings, now mounted as a four-fold screen, originally were four *fusuma* (sliding partitions) for a Japanese room. In the subsequent remounting, the *hikite* (finger plates) were removed and the openings neatly patched. The two geese fly low over the shore where breaking waves emerge from mist-filled distance.



(Detail)

Portrait of Daruma 73.10
Ekaku Hakuin, 1685-1768; ink on paper
Zenga school, Edo period
H. 160.0 cm. (63 in.); W. 93.0 cm. (36⅝ in.)

Daruma, the founder and first patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China, is traditionally said to have been a missionary from India. The distinctive characteristics of Daruma, such as his large nose, lidless eyes, and beard, are boldly delineated. A single, curvilinear line defining the body was drawn with wet ink that dried unevenly to create a handsome, textured surface. Ekaku Hakuin, a famous Buddhist priest, is one of the more intriguing personalities of the Edo period. His paintings often have a quality of caricature that transposes traditional subjects to a type of folk art, and invariably reflect Hakuin's sensitive yet severe outlook toward mankind.

Gama Sennin 04.192
Soga Shōhaku, 1730-83; ink on paper
Soga school, Edo period, 18th c.
H. 109.1 cm. (42-15/16 in.); W. 42.2 cm. (16⅝ in.)

Although Shōhaku began his career by studying with a teacher of the Kanō school, his unrestrained brushwork clearly does not belong to that tradition. He returned to the vigorous brush painting style of the Muromachi artists and produced paintings that reflect the achievement of those earlier masters. In this painting, Shōhaku's immodest brushwork is apparent. The Taoist immortal, Gama Sennin, skips along carrying a bamboo staff with his three-legged toad perched on his head. The vitality of the brush, which appears never to have paused as the artist's hand moved over the surface of the paper, reveals the disheveled Taoist as a comical, rather appealing fellow. Though the brush method harks back to earlier traditions, the powerful image is Shōhaku's own creation. The artist's signature and seal appear in the lower right corner of the painting.

A Winter Party 00.113
Utagawa Toyoharu, 1735-1814
Ink, color and gold on silk
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 18th-19th c.
H. 52.7 cm. (20¾ in.); W. 96.3 cm. (37-15/16 in.)

Toyoharu cleverly contrasts both the Kanō and Ukiyo-e traditions of his own training in this scene of three geishas and two gentlemen relaxing before a wintry landscape. Slanting lines of the mats and verandah slats, together with the vertical pattern of the open *shōji* suggest a three-dimensional space, while brightly colored kimonos and elegantly ornamented lacquered objects establish a mood of cultivated relaxation. The warmth and animation within the foreground area contrast with the cold wintry background landscape. Angular pine trees and softly rounded hills are clearly indebted to the decorative Kanō tradition.

Moonlight Revelry at the Dozō Sagami 03.54
Kitagawa Utamarō, 1754-1806
Ink and color on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 18th-19th c.
H. 147.0 cm. (58 in.); L. 318.6 cm. (10 ft. 5½ in.)

Utamarō was one of the greatest masters of the Ukiyo-e school of Japanese painting and prints. Occasionally the term Ukiyo-e is fancifully but literally translated as "pictures of the floating world." Actually these paintings are the genre art of Japan, representing the popular pleasures and pastimes of the period. Utamarō was fascinated with life in the bustling city of Edo, especially the licensed quarters. Biographers often record that Utamarō spent much of his time in dissipation there; however, even if this is true, it does not seem to have diminished his artistic ability.

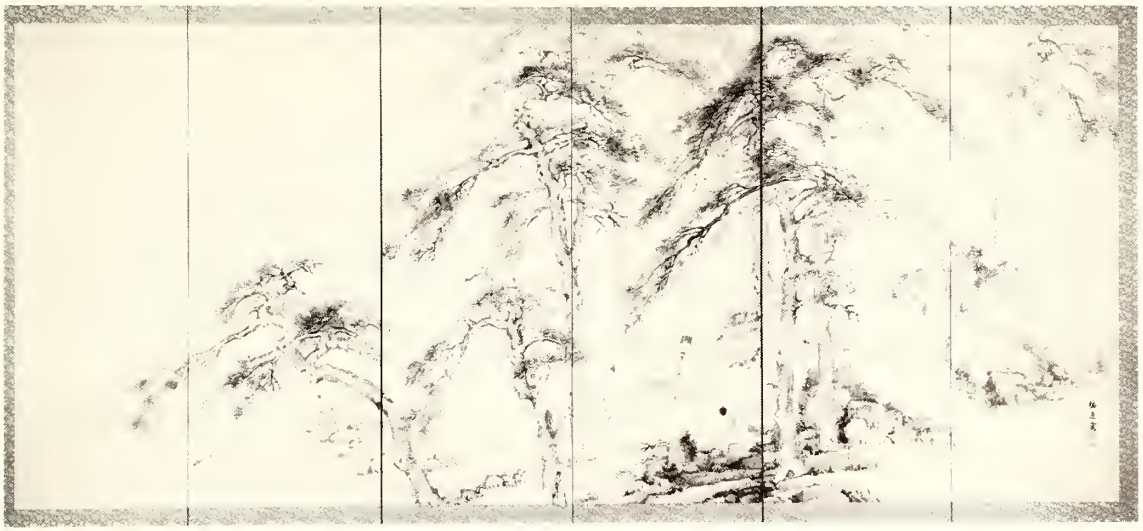
This painting, recording life within the quarter, includes many characters familiar from Utamarō's prints. The influence of Western perspective is apparent in the way the composition moves back through the room crowded with people, out to the balcony, and then to the river and the distant horizon. The man's shadow reveals Utamarō's interest in Western realism. The panel bears a poem by Ōta Nampo (1749-1823), as well as paintings attributed to Kō Sukoku (1730-1804) and Kanō Yoshinobu (1747-97), all contemporaries of Utamarō.

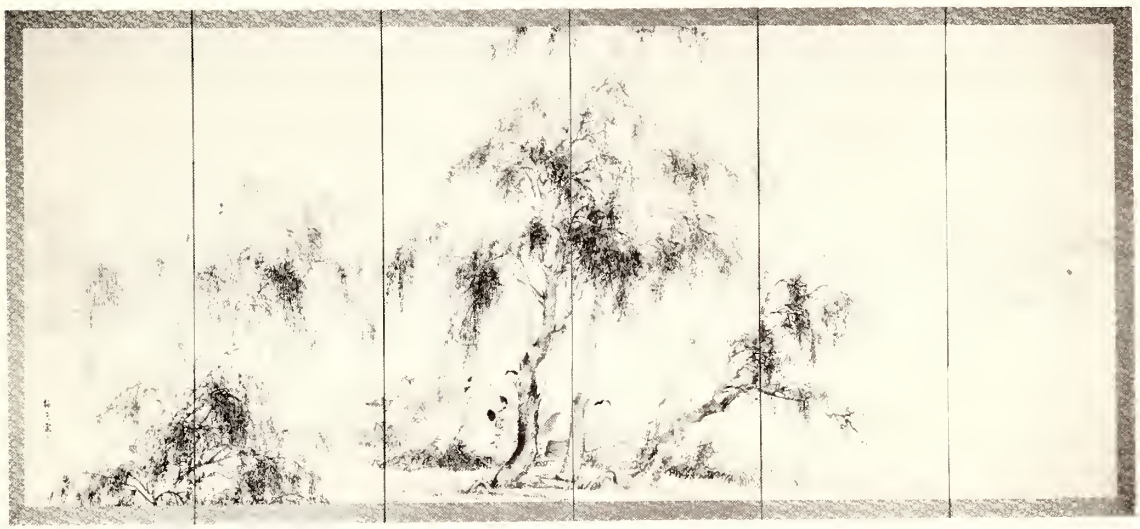
Mount Fuji 98.110
Katsushika Hokusai, 1760-1849
Ink and color on silk
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period, 19th c.
H. 36.2 cm. (14¼ in.); W. 51.0 cm. (20-1/16 in.)

The image of Mount Fuji appears throughout Hokusai's work. With a seemingly inexhaustible sense of inventiveness the artist was able to reuse the familiar snow-capped mountain, yet constantly achieve a sense of fresh vitality. In this small painting, done when Hokusai was 80 years old, the towering slopes of Fuji serve as a background for the lyrical scene of a young boy seated on the trunk of a willow tree playing a flute. Hokusai used the *tarashikomi* technique in painting the tree; there are no outlines, wet color is applied directly into wet color and allowed to blend. This technique was often used by Rimpa school artists. Hokusai's signature and seal appear in the lower right corner of the painting.

Sketchbook; Mount Fuji seen through the legs of a horse 04.357
Andō Hiroshige, 1797-1850; ink and color on paper
Ukiyo-e school, Edo period
H. 27.8 cm. (10-15/16 in.); W. 16.8 cm. (6⅝ in.)

Hiroshige's sketchbooks are filled with landscape, figure, animal and still life studies. This one contains seventy-five studies. The spontaneity of each drawing provides eloquent proof of the artist's versatility. Again, Hiroshige has taken a daring view of Japan's most famous mountain by placing it between, and thereby contrasting its curves with, the thighs of a horse. This view across Kogane Field was repeated by Hiroshige in one of his prints in the "Thirty-six Views of Fuji" series. Bold compositions such as this were the type that influenced European art of the 19th century. Hiroshige's signature and seal appear between the horse's hooves.





Landscapes 61.1 and 61.2
Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1783-1856; ink and light color on paper
Nanga school, Edo period, 18th-19th c.
Each screen: H. 153.0 cm. (60¼ in.); W. 355.6 cm. (11 ft. 8 in.)

Nanga school artists became increasingly more interested in the Chinese literati tradition during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Baiitsu, who was born in Nagoya, later moved to Kyoto where he established his reputation. His painting style was modeled after the Chinese masters of the Yüan and Ming dynasty. In these two screen paintings, Baiitsu contrasts the genteel pleasures of the literati with the more mundane activities of fishermen. A scholar sits beneath towering pine trees plucking the strings of his *ch'in* while a friend listens and three youths prepare tea. Tidy brushwork and eloquent use of ink imbue the scene with a sense of austere refinement appropriate to the theme. Quite a different mood prevails in the second screen. Myriad ink dabs made with a blunted brush define the pliant willow leaves and set up a staccato rhythm, giving some hint of the hubbub as the fishermen enjoy their tea. In this more earthy realm, a boy playing the flute in the distance provides the sole hint of elegant refinement. The composition and brushwork suggest that the screens were painted when Baiitsu was in his late sixties.

Portrait of Satō Issai 68.66
Watanabe Kazan, 1793-1841; ink and color on silk
Shijō school, Edo period, 19th c.
H. 113.0 cm. (44½ in.); W. 51.5 cm. (20¼ in.)

Watanabe Kazan is famous both as an artist and patriot. For daring to criticize the Tokugawa Shōgunate, he was confined to his native town where he later took his own life. This portrait of his teacher, Satō Issai (1772-1859), painted in 1824, when Kazan was 32, reflects the artist's interest in European and Nanga painting techniques. Kazan made several sketches before executing his first portrait of Issai in 1821. This version was painted three years later. Both paintings present the noted Confucian scholar as a lean, almost ascetic figure, clothed in brilliant green robes and a fur-ornamented black vest. The trace of a surgical scar on Issai's neck is indicative of Kazan's keen interest in realism. Issai wrote an inscription in the upper section of the painting.

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